

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN BOREALIS

Case study

Master's Thesis
Laura Elina Hänninen
Aalto University School of Business
Management and International Business
Spring 2017

Author Laura Elina Hänninen		
Title of thesis Employee engagement in Borealis		
Degree Master of Science in Management and International Business		
Degree programme Degree programme in Management and International Business		
Thesis advisor(s) Hertta Vuorenmaa		
Year of approval 2017	Number of pages 123	Language English

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the real-life practices and methods of developing employee engagement in the case company Borealis during a six-year period. Furthermore, the objective was to understand the perception of the employees towards these actions and the meanings the employees gave to employee engagement. The methods of data collection used to achieve these goals were to utilize pre-existing documentary data, such as work-related survey results, instructions, presentations, and personnel reports from the past six-year period from Borealis and the thematic interviews of voluntary employees of two departments within Borealis, the Materials Handling and the Administration.

Firstly, the data analysis was focused on the pre-existing documentary data to describe the methods consisting of regular practices and special campaigns used to develop employee engagement during the six-year period. Then the work-related survey results, consisting of the People Survey and the Work Place Survey were analysed from the past six years to comprehend the progress on the level of employee engagement that can be identified from the results. The methods used to analyse the interviews were the verbatim transcriptions of the recordings and a thematic analysis to reveal the recurring themes from the interviews. The themes were then grouped and categorized to combine themes with similar features in them. The results of this analysis naturally followed the job demands-resources model, so a synthesis was formed that follows the main elements from the job demands-resources model with the findings from this case study of Borealis.

The main findings of this case study indicated that the development practices and methods of employee engagement used in Borealis are multiple and they are a combination of regular practices and special campaigns. However, there seems to be such a number of development activities, that there isn't enough time to implement them properly, and the results of some of the practices appeared unclear to the employees. The conclusion is that the tools are already there but there is a need to brighten the message, bring the actions closer to the everyday lives of the employees before embarking into new ones. The main findings regarding the meanings the employees gave to employee engagement could be understood through the antecedents to employee engagement. These antecedents could be categorised into work demands and job and personal resources. The job demands consisted of emotional demands and environmental stressors, the job resources entailed aspects of work, career and the organization and the personal resources were the professional capabilities and personal lives. The main antecedents in Borealis were the possibilities for learning and development and efforts invested by Borealis into the wellbeing. The main job demands in Borealis were hurry and workload, bureaucracy, and challenges in working relationships. The main outcomes in Borealis was the overall high level of employee engagement and high work morale.

Keywords employee engagement, job resources, job demands, personal resources, organisational development, wellbeing, job demands-resources model

Tekijä Laura Elina Hänninen

Työn nimi Employee engagement in Borealis

Tutkinto Kauppatieteiden maisteri

Koulutusohjelma Johtamisen ja kansainvälisen kaupan koulutusohjelma

Työn ohjaaja(t) Hertta Vuorenmaa

Hyväksymisvuosi 2017**Sivumäärä** 123**Kieli** englanti

Tiivistelmä

Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli ymmärtää millaisia tosielämän käytäntöjä ja prosesseja on ollut käytössä työn imun lisäämiseksi Borealiksella viimeisen kuuden vuoden aikana. Lisäksi tavoitteena oli saavuttaa ymmärrys Borealoksen työntekijöiden näkemyksistä näitä kehitystoimenpiteitä kohtaan sekä millaisia merkityksiä työntekijät antavat työn imulle. Tavoitteiden saavuttamiseksi tietoa kerättiin Borealiksella jo olemassa olevista tiedostoista ja lähteistä, kuten työpaikkaselvityksien tuloksista, People Survey -työilmapiirikyselyn tuloksista, ohjeista, esityksistä ja henkilöstöraporteista viimeisen kuuden vuoden ajalta, sekä lisäksi kahden osaston eli Materiaalinkäsittelyn ja hallinnon vapaaehtoisia työntekijöitä temaattisesti haastatteleamalla.

Analyysin ensimmäisessä vaiheessa keskityttiin dokumentaariseen dataan kuvaamalla normaaliin toimintaan kuuluvia käytäntöjä sekä erityisiä kampanjoita, joiden avulla työn imua oli Borealiksella kehitetty kuuden vuoden aikana. Sen jälkeen työpaikkaselvityksen sekä työilmapiirikyselyn tuloksia analysoitiin kuuden vuoden ajalta, jotta työn imun kehityksestä saataisiin kuva. Analyysin toisessa vaiheessa haastattelujen nauhoitukset ensin litteroitiin, jonka jälkeen tuloksia analysoitiin temaattisesti. Temaattisen analyysin tuloksena tuotettujen koodien avulla tuotiin esille toistuvat teemat haastatteluista, jotka sen jälkeen ryhmiteltiin isommiksi kokonaisuuksiksi. Nämä ryhmät olivat luonnostaan samankaltaiset kuin työn kuormitus-voimavarat mallissa, joten tutkimuksen tuloksista muodostettiin synteesi yhdistellen mallia ja löydöksiä Borealikselta.

Tämän tapaustutkimuksen päälöydökset viittasivat siihen, että työn imun kehityskäytäntöjä oli Borealiksella paljon, ja ne muodostuivat sekä normaaliin toimintaan kuuluvista kuin erityisistä kampanjoista. Näiden käytäntöjen ja kampanjoiden suuri määrä tuntui kuitenkin vaikuttavan siihen, kuinka henkilöstö niihin suhtautui. Implementointiin ei ollut panostettu riittävästi ja henkilöstön näkemyksen mukaan lopputulos vaikutti epäselvältä. Kaikki työkalut ovat siis jo olemassa, mutta niiden viestiä tulee kirkastaa ja toimenpiteet tulee tuoda lähemmäksi henkilöstön jokapäiväistä elämää ennen uusia projekteja. Päälöydökset koskien merkityksiä, joita henkilöstö antaa työn imulle, voidaan ymmärtää työn imun tekijöiden kautta. Nämä tekijät jaoteltiin työn kuormituksiksi, sekä työhön liittyviksi ja henkilökohtaisiksi voimavaroiksi. Työn kuormitukseen sisältyi tunneperäisistä vaateita ja ympäristötekijöihin liittyvistä kuormituksista, työn voimavaroihin itse työtehtävään, uraan ja organisaatioon liittyviä tekijöitä sekä henkilökohtaisia voimavaroihin ammatillisia kykyjä ja henkilökohtaisesta elämästä saatavia voimavaroja. Työn imun voimavarojen päätekijöiksi Borealiksella tunnistettiin mahdollisuus oppimiseen ja kehittymiseen sekä Borealoksen panostus hyvinvointiin. Pääkuormitustekijät olivat kiire ja työkuorma, byrokratia sekä haasteet henkilöiden välisissä suhteissa. Tuloksena Borealiksella on yleisesti ottaen korkea taso työn imussa sekä korkea työmoraali.

Avainsanat työn imu, työn voimavarat, henkilökohtaiset voimavarat, työn kuormitus, organisaation kehittäminen, työhyvinvointi

Preface and acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude towards Borealis for the support for me during the research process, without which conducting this study would not have been possible. A special thank you needs to be given for Nina Henriksson for your guidance especially in the early days of planning this research, making it possible to align the interests of myself and of Borealis. Furthermore, special thanks goes also to Aliisa Vainikka for helping me find the materials I needed for this research and by supporting me in my hour of need. And finally, I would like to thank Marja Ora, and all my colleagues in Human Resources for your support and for believing in me during this process.

I would also like to thank my thesis supervisor Hertta Vuorenmaa for her guidance and support, her constructive feedback, insights and patience throughout this research process.

And finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude towards my husband, Matti and my son Anton, and to the rest of my family who have given their support for me during this process and the entire studies. Thank you for making this possible!

In Porvoo, 23rd of February, 2017

Laura Hänninen

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Background of this study	1
1.2	Case company of this study	2
1.3	Research gap	4
1.4	Objectives and research questions	4
1.5	Definitions	6
1.6	Structure of this thesis.....	7
2	Literature review	9
2.1	Introduction.....	9
2.2	The development of the concept “employee engagement”	11
2.3	Relating concepts	14
2.3.1	Behavioural concepts.....	15
2.3.2	Belief related concepts.....	16
2.3.3	Affective concepts	17
2.3.4	Complex psychological states	18
2.3.5	Summary of relating concepts	19
2.4	Conceptualizing employee engagement	20
2.4.1	Employee engagement as a distinct construct	21
2.4.2	Employee engagement as a positive antithesis for burnout.....	24
2.4.3	Towards a synthesis of employee engagement	30
2.4.4	Summary of the models and meters of employee engagement	32
2.5	Enhancing employee engagement	35
2.5.1	Positive interventions	35
2.5.2	The Engagement Management Model.....	39
2.6	Summary.....	40
3	Methodology	42

3.1	The research question	42
3.2	Borealis Porvoo as a study context	43
3.3	The role of the researcher vs. role of the employee	44
3.4	Case study and the methods used in this study	46
3.5	Methods of data collection	48
3.5.1	Documentary material	48
3.5.2	The interviews	50
3.6	Methods of data analysis	53
3.7	Evaluation of the study	56
4	Findings	59
4.1	Developing employee engagement in Borealis	59
4.1.1	Views on development	65
4.1.2	How does it show?	66
4.2	Meanings to employee engagement	69
4.2.1	Job resources	70
4.2.2	Personal Resources	77
4.2.3	Job demands	80
4.3	Summary	91
5	Discussion	93
5.1	The development of employee engagement	96
5.2	The meanings of employee engagement	102
6	Conclusion	109
7	References	112
8	Appendices	119
8.1	Appendix 1: Borealis Wellbeing concept	119

Table of figures, tables and charts:

Figure 1 An integrative model of work motivation and engagement.....	15
Figure 2 Job demands-resources model on work engagement	29
Figure 3 A model of antecedents and consequences of employee engagement.....	32
Figure 4 The Engagement Management Model	40
Figure 5 The departments participating in this study	43
Figure 6 The thematic interview plan.....	53
Figure 7 Development of employee engagement in Borealis.....	60
Figure 8 Framework of development of employee engagement in Borealis.....	95
Table 1 Employee engagement and disengagement.....	24
Table 2 Maslach's dimensions of burnout and engagement	26
Table 3 Job demands-resources model antecedents	30
Table 4 The antecedents of employee engagement	34
Table 5 People Survey questions concerning Sustainable Engagement.....	50
Table 6 The interview extract codes.....	51
Table 7 Synthesis of categorizing of the data.....	56
Table 8 People policy and people principles in Borealis.....	61
Table 9 People Survey: Being proud of Borealis and recommending as a place of work ..	68
Table 10 The perceptions of employees in the interviews	101
Chart 1 Employee engagement in Borealis (People Survey)	69
Chart 2 Resources and obstacles (People Survey 2014).....	77
Chart 3 Work Place Survey results: Workload in Materials Handling.....	84
Chart 4 Work Place Survey results: Workload in Administration	85

1 Introduction

” Creating a high performance work environment is a complex problem. We have to communicate a mission and values, train managers and leaders to live these values, and then carefully select the right people who fit. And once people join, we have to continuously improve, redesign, and tweak the work environment to make it modern, humane, and enjoyable.” (Bersin, 2014)

“This is about how we create the conditions in which employees offer more of their capability and potential”. (David McLeod, 2016)

“I would suggest that using the word “engagement” often limits our thinking. It’s assumes that our job is to reach out and “engage” people, rather than to build an organization that is exciting, fulfilling, meaningful, and fun.” (Bersin, 2014)

1.1 Background of this study

Companies want to be successful and have a competitive edge over its rivals. One of the biggest assets in companies are their talents, their employees, that are the determinants of how well a company does in the volatile modern marketplaces. To be able to prosper in a continuously changing environment, the organizations not only need a healthy workforce, they need a flourishing workforce where employees can be vigorous, dedicated and absorbed in their work (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010) Employee engagement has thus become the key item in defining the success of today's companies. In a competitive global market companies' ability to achieve their employees' fullest potential is one determinant on their success or failure (Bakker & Leiter, 2010).

During the recent decades, the rules of the working life have changed. Previously, the careers of the employees had been long, and a person might retire from the same employer's service than was his or her first employment. Today, the expectations are different from both employees and employers side. Still in the 70's hard work, diligence and loyalty towards the employer in the minds and in the actions of the employees was valued. Employee contracts were in most cases made to last and the organizations represented safety and continuity (Aro, 2006). However, the paternalistic management approach characterised with long careers and predictability aren't expected from either side anymore (Bates, 2004). In the 90's the situation in work places started to change from static to dynamic, that can be characterized by constant change driven by the need to fulfil the different stakeholder's expectations

towards the organization and thus gain the right to exist and operate (Aro, 2006). This changing operating environment poses a need for the employees to adapt to development projects, restructuring and savings campaigns (Aro, 2006) which has also led a way to the development of the so called “engagement gap” that is costing millions to companies (Bates, 2004; Kowalski, 2003). On the other hand, this change has given the employees an opportunity to be in charge of their professional development, to build up competences in the pursuit of new challenges in their careers (Bates, 2004). The ability to adapt to uncertainty and willingness to participate in lifelong learning means also the ability to operate in new types of conditions and constantly changing social environments (Aro, 2006). Hence, as the rules in the labour market have changed, they have both led to the declining of employee engagement but also to the rising interest towards it (Bates, 2004). Fortunately, organizations can be developed in a way that fosters the conditions for employee engagement. At the core lies the employee’s opportunity to ensure a secure employment by employees’ productivity, but there are benefits also for the individual. In a labour market characterized by change, as is the trend in the 21st century, individuals benefit from representing their personal productivity as well to promote their possibility to opportunities in the future within or outside the company. (Bakker & Leiter, 2010)

1.2 Case company of this study

Borealis is a large international chemicals company that produces base chemicals, plastics raw materials (polyolefins) and solutions for agribusiness (fertilizers). It has a long history of over 50 years, it has 6500 employees worldwide and provides specialised solutions for its customers in over 120 countries. The ownership of the company is abroad as well as the headquarters that are located in Vienna. In Porvoo, Borealis produces base chemicals including phenol, acetone, ethylene, propylene and butadiene and plastics raw materials and has an overall polyolefin capacity of 600.000 tons yearly. Instead of being solely a manufacturing location Borealis Porvoo also has an innovation centre, which focuses on catalyst and process research. (Borealis Polymers Oy, 2015a)

Borealis’ mission is *“to be the leading provider of chemical and innovative plastics solution that create value for society”*. Their strategy to achieve this mission is through for instance pursuing operational excellence keeping safety in mind at all times. Also, they aim to grow polyolefin business in several application areas, such as in infrastructure, automotive and advanced packaging. By focusing on quality their aim is to exceed in customer service. In

addition, they continue to develop cross-cultural organizational capabilities and the learning organization and to outperform financially. (Borealis AG, 2015a)

General information on employees in Borealis Porvoo

The number of employees in Borealis Porvoo varies only slightly from year to year and has settled around 900 employees. The number is affected by for instance the turnarounds done regularly in the plants and the number of ongoing projects and investments. In general, the situations with the employees is rather stable with the majority of contracts being permanent (96%) and the number of employee within each employee group that have remained more or less the same for the past six years. The biggest employee group is blue collars representing almost half of all the employees in Porvoo. The majority of employees work in regular office hours but nearly half (45%) operates in shifts. (Borealis Polymers Oy, 2015c) Typically, the employment contracts have been long in Borealis. For instance, in 2015 almost half of the employees had been working for Borealis for more than 16 years. The number has been coming down during the recent years but the continuing challenge is the high number of retiring employees within the next ten years, with the annual estimated number being 30 to 50 employees. Roughly a third of employees have been working in Borealis for 0 to 5 years which also indicates that the rise of the new generation in Borealis has already started. (Borealis Polymers Oy, 2015c)

The overall level of turnover is quite low in Borealis. On average, the turnover has fluctuated between 1,7% to 3,9%. The turnover rate has been higher for employees that have had a shorter than 10 years of service within Borealis. (Borealis Polymers Oy, 2015c) To put it shortly, the longer you stay in Borealis the more likely it is that you will stay even longer. However, when looking at the results of the number of people who answered in People Survey, that they are seriously considering leaving Borealis, the numbers are higher than the actual number of people that had left. Comparing the number of the actual turnover to those 16% to 18% of employees that indicated in the People Survey that consider leaving tell a whole different story (Towers Watson, 2010, 2012, 2014). Thus, there is a wide gap of people that are not as committed to staying in Borealis as possible but haven't actually made the decision of leaving the company yet.

Hand in hand with the society at large, the expectations and interests of our case company Borealis towards their employees have changed and evolved over the years. In the 1980's the focus of attention was on being content at the workplace, but already in the 1990's the

focus evolved into commitment and on the employees' plans to stay within the company. Yet, after the turn of the century merely being content and committed wasn't enough anymore and the focus shifted towards motivation and performance. Today, the interest has evolved even further to include wellbeing to the center of attention together with motivation and performance. (Borealis Polymers Oy, 2014b) Thus, Borealis has chosen an active approach on developing employee engagement. This also forms the basis for this study. The main purpose of this case study is to examine how employee engagement has been developed in Borealis during a six-year period through everyday actions and special projects and how do the employees of Borealis perceive these efforts.

1.3 Research gap

Even though the amount of studies on employee engagement is rapidly growing (Saks & Gruman, 2014) there still exists a limited amount of empirical studies on the subject (Saks, 2006; Wollard & Shuck, 2011). Some conceptual work has been done for instance by Macey and Schneider (2008) but the field is still missing on empirical work that is focused solely on the different aspects of the antecedents of employee engagement (Wollard & Shuck, 2011). Furthermore, there is a call for experimental and longitudinal studies that would provide more definitive answers on the outcomes of employee engagement (Saks, 2006) and to examining circumstances in which different interactive tools and methods are used to enhance employee engagement (Gruman & Saks, 2011) Given the vested interest in organizations to achieve a workforce that is not only healthy or symptom free but to have engaged employees that are flourishing and thriving the organizations have a clear interest towards developing employee engagement. This shift towards positive psychology offers also the opportunity for human resources management and occupational health psychology to join forces. (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010). This research offers an opportunity to enhance the understanding in the field of employee engagement by using materials as a source from both occupational health psychology and human resources management perspective. Furthermore, due to the limited amount of studies conducted that focus on the perceptions of employees on the development actions of employee engagement this study can also enrich the understanding, which the field of employee engagement studies could benefit from.

1.4 Objectives and research questions

The objective of this research is to shed light on real life practices and methods used to develop employee engagement but also to see what kind of affects this has on the employees of Borealis. Basically, this means that the purpose is to understand what kind of efforts has

been done in Borealis to improve the levels of employee engagement during the past six years and to see what the employee's perceptions of these actions are. Furthermore, using a retrospective view allows me to gain an understanding of the possible affects these development practices have had on the views of the employees as they are seen in work-related surveys in two departments, of Materials Handling and Administration. In other words, the purpose was to see whether the employees have reacted in a way that it would show in the survey results in regards to the levels of employee engagement.

The reasoning behind selecting Materials Handling and Administration departments were that they have a similar amount, around 50 employees in each but also, that they mainly represent different employee groups. Materials Handling employees consists mainly of blue collar employees working in shifts but also from white collars working on regular office hours. The employees of Administration are white collars who work on regular office hours. This gives an opportunity to gain some insights of possible differences between employee groups. On the other hand, my aim is to give voice to the employees in regards of employee engagement, and see what kind of meanings they give to it but also to understand what their view is of the actions done to promote employee engagement. Through this approach, I can provide valuable information to Borealis by giving additional and by its nature, richer understanding regarding employee engagement in addition to the workplace surveys that are done on a regular basis.

A retrospective view from the year 2010 to this day is used in order to understand better how engagement has been built and developed in Borealis. This timespan was chosen because the schedule of surveys called "The People Survey" and "The Workplace Survey" (=WPS). People Surveys were conducted by the Towers Watson consulting firm on years 2010, 2012 and 2014, respectively. The workplace surveys were conducted by the occupational health care in 2010 and in 2015 in Administration and in 2011 in Materials Handling. This timescale also allowed the scanning of different practices and campaigns that have been used to improve employee engagement and in addition, to use these survey results as indicators of advances in employee engagement.

The first phase of this research aims to grasp an understanding of what has been done in Borealis to improve the levels of employee engagement. This will be done mainly by analyzing documentary materials i.e. naturally occurring data that has been produced in Borealis as a method of improving the levels of employee engagement during this six-year

period. The documentary materials typically include presentations materials used to promote the regular practices or the introduction materials of special campaigns or projects but also instructions and manuals for both managers and employees of Borealis. They also include materials relating to the work-related surveys in Borealis, namely the People survey and the Work Place Survey, in addition to the results of the surveys itself. In other words, the aim of this first phase of research is to reach an understanding of how engagement has been built in Borealis and what has been the level of employee engagement in the two department groups and Borealis Porvoo in general.

The second stage of this research is conducted with the purpose of reaching a deep understanding on how and why the employees of the two departments of Borealis Porvoo perceive these practices of employee engagement building through interviewing some of the employees. Based on the results of these two phases of research and current knowledge in the research field on employee engagement the objective is to come up with suggestions on how building employee engagement could be improved in Borealis an understanding on how employee engagement levels could be enhanced.

The research questions for this study are as follows:

Q1. How has employee engagement been developed in Borealis during the past six years?

- a. How do the employees perceive the actions done to support its development?
- b. How does it show in work related surveys during the past six years?

Q2. What kind of meanings the employees of Borealis give to employee engagement and how does it affect their work and how the work is done?

1.5 Definitions

Employee engagement

No mutual agreement on what engagement is exist. For the clarity of this thesis, a broad description of the term will be used that defines employee engagement as:

Employee engagement is a desired motivational state. It is a unique concept that consists of cognitive, emotional and behavioural components. It acts as a mediator between the antecedents (job and personal resources, job demands) of employee engagement and positive outcomes. The personal-level outcomes include individual role performance, growth and development and the organizational-level outcomes include improved quality of performance. (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010; Saks, 2006; Saks & Gruman, 2014)

Job resources

The physical, psychological, social or organizational aspects of a job that may have a positive effect on achieving work goals, reduce work demands and stimulate personal growth and development (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001)

Personal resources

The aspects of the self that are generally linked to resiliency (Hobfoll, Johnson, Ennis, & Jackson, 2003) and can develop, be developed and managed for improved work performance (Hakanen & Roodt, 2010)

Job demands

The physical, sociological and organizational aspects of a job that require sustained physical or mental efforts that have an effect on the level of employee engagement (Demerouti et. al, 2001)

Developing employee engagement

The efforts invested by a company towards increasing the levels of employee engagement.

1.6 Structure of this thesis

The first chapter of this thesis introduced the background for this study and the research gap that this study is its own part aiming to fulfil. Furthermore, the research objectives and the research questions were defined. Finally, the key concepts concerning this study were shortly explained. The second chapter includes a review of the current literature concerning employee engagement. The literature review goes through the challenges of studying employee engagement, how the development of the concept has emerged and makes a distinction between employee engagement and its closest relating concepts. Furthermore, the review describes the different ways employee engagement has been conceptualised by introducing the different models used to measure and describe employee engagement ending with a synthesis to gain a comprehensive understanding of what is meant by employee engagement. Finally, the different ways to enhancing employee engagement are introduced.

The third introduces the methodology choices made to conduct this study. A short introduction on the case company is made together with considerations of my own role as a researcher and as a current employee of the case company. The chapter goes through in detail how the documentary material and the interviews to achieve the objectives of this research were gathered and analysed and conclude with evaluating this research.

Fourth chapter focuses on introducing the findings of this case study and the data gathered using the methods described in the third chapter. Firstly, it focuses on the development practices and special campaigns used in Borealis to develop employee engagement and the different perceptions the employees expressed towards these actions. Furthermore, the chapter introduces the findings made from the work-related surveys in regards to how and if the level of employee engagement has developed throughout the years.

The fifth chapter is dedicated to the discussion on the topic, on the ways in which the findings of this research can be seen compared to the theoretical background of employee engagement. The final sixth chapter makes conclusions of this research, evaluates the practical implications of it and makes suggestions for future research.

2 Literature review

2.1 Introduction

Understanding what employee engagement is in the first place is difficult due to numerous reasons. For one, there are many theories and models that try to answer what is meant by the concept. Reaching a consensus of the term would be important to practitioners and researchers alike, however no single agreement to this day has been reached to define what is meant when talking about employee engagement. Surely, one reason behind this confusion is that employee engagement aroused far more interest among practitioners instead of the academic society after it was first introduced (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). As Saks (2006) noted, the majority of the data available about employee engagement can be found in practitioner journals where the origin of the information comes from practice and mainly management consultancy firms, instead of theory and validated empirical research.

The conceptual diversity causes negative implications both for research and practice. From the research perspective, the effects lie on the difficulty on accumulating a coherent body of research knowledge. From the practice perspective, it becomes problematic to make recommendations for actions if the conceptualization is ambiguous. (Fleck & Inceoglu, 2010) Furthermore, the connotations of what employee engagement is or the acclaimed benefits of the concept differ from one consultancy firm to another which easily causes feelings of putting “old wine in a new bottle” (Saks, 2006). In other words, by mixing and matching components of other concepts such as job satisfaction, commitment and extra-role behaviour with employee engagement as best seen fit makes understanding what employee engagement more difficult and also might influence negatively on the value of the concept.

Nevertheless, when looking at how practitioners define employee engagement, similarities can be identified. Typically, employee engagement is characterized by:

1. Organizational commitment, and in particular affectual (i.e. emotional) and continual commitment to the organization. In short, the engaged employee has a desire to stay within the organization
2. Extra-role behaviour, meaning the employee shows discretionary behaviour that promotes the efficiency and productivity of the organization.

Even with the aforementioned lack of consensus of what employee engagement is the popularity of concept indicated that there definitely “is something to it”. As the interest towards employee engagement remained high amongst practitioners also the academic

researchers interest grew which led to a new rise in the amount of studies in the academia also. (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010) However, even the new rise of interest towards employee engagement in academia hasn't resulted a mutual understanding of the concept.

In the academic literature employee engagement has been defined in many ways and to make things more complicated, no consensus even of the name of the construct exists. According to Saks and Gruman (2014) there are supporters for the usage of employee engagement (Macey & Schneider, 2008), at the same time as some call it job engagement (Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010) or work engagement (see, for instance Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006; Sonnentag, 2003; Schaufeli, Taris, & Van Rhenen, 2008). In addition, engagement has also been defined though using a variety of time perspectives. These definitions include trait engagement; a rather permanent positive view on life and work and state engagement that refers to a shorter spanned feeling of for instance absorption or energy (Sonnentag, Dormann, & Demerouti, 2010). Debate surrounding the name relates to the conceptualization of the term, but also to the relating concepts (Bakker & Leiter, 2010).

Macy and Schneider (2008) have used a very broad definition of employee engagement as a desirable condition that has an organizational purpose that include both attitudinal and behavioural components such as involvement, commitment, passion, enthusiasm, focused effort and energy. Bakker and Leiter (2010) on the other hand refer to work engagement as a specific and well-defined psychological state that can be used for both empirical research in addition to practise. Furthermore, they criticize the usage of employee engagement as subsuming concepts such as trait engagement, state engagement and organizational citizenship behaviour or behavioural engagement.

Thus, no generally accepted theory exists on employee engagement (Saks & Gruman, 2014) Fortunately, some commonalities can also be found from the conceptualizations made in the academia. These commonalities portray that employee engagement:

1. is a motivational state including behaviour-energetic, emotional and cognitive components
2. is associated with positive outcomes both at an individual level (individual role performance, growth and development) and at an organizational level (performance quality)

(Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010; Saks & Gruman, 2014)

Ultimately, even with the confusion that lingers around the concept of employee engagement it is still in the hopes of many employers to have employees that are engaged. Thus, employers pursue to operate in ways in which employee engagement can flourish. Developing employee engagement can be approached from the angle of “positive interventions” where employees pursue towards building a working environment where employee themselves can flourish and thrive at work (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010) or from the angle of performance management with employee engagement as one of the core goals (Gruman & Saks, 2011). Whichever method for developing employee engagement is chosen, it brings benefits for both the employees and employers. Engaged employees that are not only healthy but also engaged in their work and the values and goals of the organization is a valuable asset in facing the challenges of the continuously changing operating environment. Engaged employees are encouraged to achieve their highest potential and given the opportunity and possibilities to thrive at work. (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010)

In the following chapters the development of employee engagement is introduced to gain a more in-depth understanding of what is meant when talking about the concept. Then, the closest relating concepts are introduced and a distinction is made between employee engagements to clarify the construct. Thirdly, the different models and instruments used to define and measure employee engagement are presented to understand the ways the concept has been studied and conceptualized. In the fourth chapter, the different ways employee engagement can be developed are presented. And finally, a synergy of employee engagement is introduced that combines the understanding of employee engagement as it is seen today.

2.2 The development of the concept “employee engagement”

The development of the concept “employee engagement” has been affected by the interest towards the concepts by practitioners, but also by two, distinguishable research paths that exist in the academia. The following chapter goes through these phases of development and also the affects they have had on the understanding of the concept.

The roots of the term “employee engagement” aren’t clear, but most likely it was first used by the Gallup organization in the 1990’s (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). Gallup’s researchers Buckingham and Coffman published a book called “First, break all the rules” of the research they had conducted throughout the years for Gallup (ibid.). The book was a success and it led to the growing interest to the subject especially by practitioners. According to Saks and Gruman (2014) the development of employee engagement in the management literature was

characterised by the development of two themes. The first theme is promoted by numerous writers who propose that employee engagement is the key item in defining whether companies are successful and have a competitive edge compared to its rivals. The second theme indicated that employee engagement is constantly in decline. This decline, called the “engagement gap” - the claim states, is costing millions to companies and societies as a whole (Bates, 2004; Kowalski, 2003). For instance, Bates (2004) argues that the previous way of working life with a paternalistic management approach with long careers and predictability has come to an end. Bates claims that long-term relationships between employers and employees aren’t expected from either side anymore. Furthermore, employees want to take control of their careers, change employers and jobs and to leverage experience from organization to another, in pursuit of a better jobs. Employers, on the other hand, want only employees that meet the expectation and flexibility in situations where there are changes in the markets or internal strategies of the company (ibid.) Either way, as the rules of the labour market have changed it has led the way towards both to the declining of employee engagement and subsequently, to the rising interest towards it.

As the interest towards employee engagement grew in the eyes of the practitioners, also academic researchers took an interest towards studying employee engagement further. The term “engagement” was first conceptualized in academia by Kahn as “*harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work*” (Kahn, 1990, p. 694). Kahn described the opposing behaviours of personal engagement and personal disengagement as to the extent to which people bring in or leave out their personal selves. Personal engagement refers to how people during their work role performances employ and express physically, cognitively or emotionally themselves. Personal disengagement refers to the uncoupling of selves from work roles by withdrawal and defending themselves physically, cognitively or emotionally. (Kahn, 1990)

However, the development of employee engagement in academia didn’t start immediately after Kahn’s article was published. According to Google Scholar, Kahn’s article aroused only a limited amount of interest amongst fellow scholars in its early years; it was only seldom cited during its first years of existence (Saks & Gruman, 2014). At the same time the popularity of positive psychology rose amongst the academic researchers. This imbalance of interest led to the situation where two main paths of development for engagement can be identified. The first path follows Kahn’s conceptualization of employee engagement as a unique, psychological state that is expressed by the employee in their work role by

researchers such as Rothbard (2001) and May, Gilson and Harter (2004). The second path of development was influenced by the rising popularity of positive psychology. The traditional focus on psychology has been on the negative rather than on the positive. According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2010) this can be seen in the number of publications focusing on the negative states of malfunctions and ill-health which outnumbers the ones focusing on the positives with a ratio of 17 to one. The rise of attention to human strength and optimal functioning, the so called “positive psychology” is seen as an alternative to the predominant focus. This also led to the rising of the theory that engagement is a positive antithesis of burnout. (ibid.) The direction on research was led by Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2001) in their study on job burnout and engagement as a mere antithesis for it. Nowadays, the interest towards Kahn’s article as it has over 1800 citations total with the majority of them done during the last six years. This also proves the rapid growth of interest in employee engagement in academia. (Saks & Gruman, 2014)

The distinction of these two approaches to engagement was highlighted with a notion, that Kahn emphasized the work role, whereas those who see engagement as a positive antithesis to job burnout emphasize the work itself or the activity relating to it. The burnout dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism and ineffectiveness would be opposite by the positive characteristics of engagement, energy and efficacy. (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010) Those who followed Maslach’s et al.’s (2001) conceptualization were content of using the Maslach Burnout Inventory or the Oldenburg Burnout Inventories as a measurement for engagement by opposite patterns of scores on the dimensions. Nonetheless, there were also criticisms towards this theory. For instance, Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) commented that by defining engagement as opposite for burnout, these two concepts would therefore complement each other. Consequently, they constructed a new instrument called the “Utrecht Work Engagement Scale” =UWES (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002). The UWES was used for measuring engagement separate from burnout, but it still followed Maslach’s et al.’s (2001) conceptualisation on engagement (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008). The claim stands, that employee engagement is a distinct concept that is merely negatively related to burnout (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). As such, they defined engagement as a *“positive, fulfilling, work-related state-of-mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption”* (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, p. 295).

To put it shortly, the development of engagement is characterized by the unproportionate interest towards the concept by empirical and practical researchers, and then by the two

research branches that can be identified in academia. This has resulted in different conceptualisations of the concept but also claims that engagement subsumes other, more traditional concepts into it. Furthermore, as the conceptualization is not unanimous, it is unclear what the antecedents and the outcomes of employee engagement are. For the sake of clarity, the next chapter introduces some of the other concepts that are related to employee engagement and makes a distinction between them.

2.3 Relating concepts

As there is still a discussion going on about what employee engagement is, it is worthwhile to make a distinction between other, more traditional concepts that have a longer history in academia. Schaufeli and Bakker (2010) made a distinction of related concepts that are to do with behaviours (extra-role behaviour and personal initiative), beliefs (organizational commitment and job involvement), affections (job satisfaction) and more complex psychological states such as flow and workaholism. According to May, Gilson and Harter (2004) employee engagement is most closely related to concepts such as job involvement and flow. Macey and Schneider (2008) noted, that most commonly employee engagement is discussed in par with job satisfaction, organizational commitment and job involvement, but maintained, that they are relating concepts. Saks (2006) notes that employee engagement is distinguishable from other related concepts, such as organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviour and job involvement.

One way to understand these relating concepts and their relationship with employee engagement is to present an overview, such as the integrative model of motivation and work engagement seen in Figure 1 (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). The model proposes that job resources have motivational elements which lead to work engagement and high performance. In the model work engagement plays a key role with job satisfaction and job involvement as a psychological state that mediates personal and job resources and the outcomes. Job satisfaction refers to low intensity affect, whereas work engagement refers to high intensity affect. Job involvement and work engagement are both defined through identification, but work engagement requires more active use of emotions and behaviour in addition to cognitions. Thus, job involvement and job satisfaction share some conceptual and empirical overlapping with work engagement, but work engagement can't be explained through these other concepts alone (ibid.) The following chapters include short introductions of these relating concepts and comparisons to employee engagement.

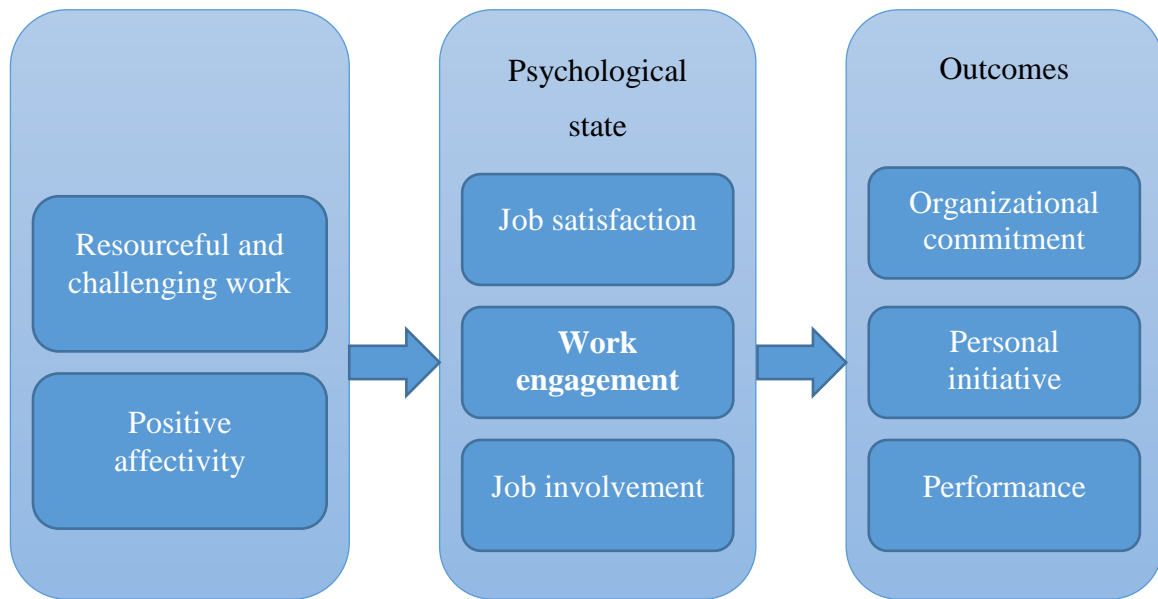


Figure 1 An integrative model of work motivation and engagement

2.3.1 Behavioural concepts

Extra-role behaviour

To understand what is extra-role behaviour, you have to know what is meant by an in-role behaviour. In-role behaviour refers to the officially required behaviours that serve the purpose of achieving the goals set by the organization. Thus, the extra-role behaviour - or what is sometimes called “organizational citizenship behaviour” (OCB) (Organ, 1997) – means any discretionary efforts that goes beyond purely achieving the predefined goals. However, these two are easily blurred with one another and making a distinction with employee engagement isn’t easy either. Typically, when talking about employee engagement, there is talk about “going the extra mile” or “doing their best, and giving their all”. However, engaged employees bring something different to a job compared to just working long hours. They bring their expertise, their creativity or problem-solving skills. Thus, engaged employees might or might not do extra-role behaviour, it should not be a constituting element of engagement. (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010)

Personal initiative

Personal initiative can be defined as proactive and self-starting work behaviour that overcomes faced barriers to achieve a purpose. It can be distinguished from a passive approach of doing what one is told to do, not being able to plan ahead and to persevere when facing challenges or difficulties and just reacting to environmental demands. (Frese & Fay,

2001). Personal initiative goes beyond what is ordinary for a job, and focuses more on the quality, rather than the quantity of the work. In this regard, personal initiative can be seen as relating to the behavioural components of employee engagement such as vigour. (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010)

2.3.2 Belief related concepts

Organizational commitment

Organizational commitment is often associated with participation and team working, multiskilling and development, and a “high trust” organizational culture (Legge, 2005). Organizational commitment has been conceptualised in two different ways which include the “side-bet theory” or a behavioural commitment and an affective or attitudinal commitment. (See for instance Legge, 2005; McGee & Ford, 1987). According to McGee and Ford (1987) the side-bet theory was evolved from the work of Becker (1960) who regarded commitment as behavioural as opposed to attitudinal. In this theory individuals are more committed to organizations through external motivators like pensions or seniority rather than having a positive affection towards the company.

Organizational commitment seen from an affective commitment point of view, on the other hand, can be defined through the depth of individuals’ identification with and involvement in an organization (Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974). The three characteristics of organizational commitment include the ¹⁾ acceptance and a strong belief in the values and goals of the organization, ²⁾ willingness to use great efforts on behalf of the organization and ³⁾ as a certain desire to continue to stay as a member of the organization (ibid.). Attitudinal commitment has been described through a three-component model. ¹⁾ Affective component refers to the employee’s attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organization. It is generally associated with positive feelings towards being a member in an organization. ²⁾ A normative component refers to feelings of obligation to stay with the organization because of personal norms and values. Affective and normative components are related components. ³⁾ Continuance component refers to the perceived costs that an employee faces if he/she decides to leave the organization which also might be associated with a lack of alternative employment opportunities. (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Legge, 2005) The difference between organizational commitment and engagement can be pin-pointed towards engagements connection with the work role or the work itself and commitments

binding force between the person and the organization as a whole (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010).

Job involvement

Job identification can be identified as a psychological identification with one's work and through the importance the person gives to the total work situation in a person's life. A person who is job-involved is affected personally by his or her whole job situation. Job-involvement can thus be described through the degree to which the work is central to the persons and their identity. (Lawler & Hall, 1970) Additionally, job-involvement is affected by general and specific job contexts. Accordingly, involvement in a specific job refers to the present job and thus answers to the question of how much the job satisfies the current needs of a person. Involvement with work in general is more of a normative belief about the value of work in a person's life. (Kanungo, 1982) The difference between job-involvement and employee engagement comes from the way engagement employees employ themselves in their work. Employee engagement involves more of an active use of emotions and behaviour in addition to cognitions. Thus, engagement is rather an antecedent to job involvement because if an individual is deeply engaged in their role they also should become identified with their jobs (May et al., 2004).

2.3.3 Affective concepts

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction can be defined as a pleasurable emotional state that is resulted through achieving or facilitating the achievement of an individuals' job value. Opposing, job dissatisfaction can be the result of frustration or a block that prevents the attainment of work goals. Both job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are functions of the perceived relationship between aspirations an individual has towards a job and the perceived offerings the job has to offer. (Locke, 1969) Comparing job satisfaction to employee engagement the difference can be identified in the fact that job satisfaction is more to do with the affects about or towards work as employee engagement is more to do with the mood at work (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). Furthermore, employee engagement is more prone towards activation such as enthusiasm, alertness and excitement whereas job satisfaction is more to do with satiation, such as being content, relaxed and calm (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2010; Macey and Schneider, 2008). Furthermore, when comparing commitment with job satisfaction, the main difference is that job satisfaction is more rapid and is associated more with tangible aspect of the work

environment than commitment. Concerning decisions of staying or leaving an organization the general attitudes the organization might bear more weight than the ones that concern a particular job. Thus, organizational commitment may be more efficient predictor of turnover than job satisfaction. Therefore, turnover is affected by each individual's expectations of the employment situation versus the perceived situation and how well the expectations are met in the working place. (Porter et al., 1974)

2.3.4 Complex psychological states

Flow

Flow can be defined as an optimal experience a person has when he or she is performing something that is so enjoyable that people will do it no matter what the cost of doing it is. The optimal state of inner experience includes an order in consciousness in situations where the person's attentions are invested in tasks with an adequate skillset and adequate opportunity to reach a realistic goal. By pursuing towards the goal the person concentrates his or her whole attention to the task at hand and forgets everything else. People experience flow and also happiness more easily and consistently in activities such as hobbies, sports, arts and games, but flow can also be achieved in the working context. At work flow is mostly related to the tasks that are characterized with variety, challenges that are appropriate and flexible in nature, that provide clear objectives and immediate feedback. Flow is associated with positive feelings such as cheerfulness and strength, and the people experiencing flow indicated they concentrated better; they were more active and felt more creative and satisfied. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) Thus, flow and being fully absorbed in one's job are very closely related experiences (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). However, a distinction can be made between absorption (and engagement) and flow in regards the continuance of these experiences. Flow can be seen as a shorter, peak experience of a total cognitive absorption to an activity whereas absorption/engagement is a more pervasive and persistent in nature. (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2010; May et al., 2004)

Workaholism

Workaholism is still a debated concept. However, one definition for it is that it is to do with an excessive involvement with the evidence of work by neglecting other areas of life. Furthermore, it is more to do with the internal motives of behaviour than defined requirement made of the job or by the organization. (Porter, 1996) Another definition described workaholism in terms of high measures work involvement, drive, perfectionism and job

stress and low scores on enjoyment of work in addition to non-delegation of responsibilities (Spence & Robbins, 1992). Workaholics work harder and put much more effort than is expected of them by their colleagues and the people they work for, and by doing so neglect their life outside the work. The drive for working hard typically comes from an inner drive, even a compulsion, and not because of external factors such as financial rewards, career, or personal problems (Schaufeli et al., 2008).

The main difference between a valuable, hardworking employee that is driven by internal motives and workaholics is the addictive behaviour maintenance by which the workaholic maintains high level of involvement even in situations where it is not needed. Workaholic convinces him or herself that working excess hours is necessary to complete all the tasks listed by themselves. As a comparison, another worker would work give extra efforts, find more efficient ways to do the work, even with the help of others and to be able to have the free time as planned. Both get the work done, but the others motive was to do better and the others were to keep going. (Porter, 1996) Whilst comparing workaholism to employee engagement, the lack of compulsion is the main difference. Engaged employees work harder because they enjoy doing so, not because there is an inner drive that can't be resisted. (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010)

2.3.5 Summary of relating concepts

There are numerous relating concepts that have a longer development history than the concept of employee engagement. As the concept of engagement is still a debated one, it is important to clarify the relationship between these related concepts with employee engagement. It can be said, that employee engagement plays a mediating role with job satisfaction and job involvement with antecedents such as personal and job resources and the outcomes, such as organizational commitments, performance and personal initiative (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010).

Although there is partial overlapping between employee engagement and other concepts such as job involvement, flow and personal initiative, the concept of employee engagement cannot be explained by simply using these concepts. In addition, a clear distinction can be made with concepts such as extra-role behaviour, organizational commitment, job satisfaction and workaholism. As to conclude, employee engagement is a separate concept that consists of cognitive, emotional and behavioural components that are linked to

individual role performance and has added value when paralleled to these other related concepts. (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010; Saks, 2006)

2.4 Conceptualizing employee engagement

The first ones to use “employee engagement” as a concept was probably Gallup organization (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). They defined employee engagement through an individual employees’ involvement and satisfaction combined with enthusiasm towards work (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). Gallup represents the work done in private organizations have done to measure employee engagement. They used several decades to come up with an instrument called Q¹² due to the 12 items it contains. (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2010) The development of the instrument originates from studies of work satisfaction, work motivation, supervisory practices and work-group effectiveness (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). The Q¹² is designed as a management tool, specifically from the standpoint of its usefulness to managers that want to create change in the workplace. In other words, the processes and issues that are measured are something that can be influenced with corrective actions by the management of the company. (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2010; Harter et al., 2002). Since it was finalized in 1998, the Q¹² has been translated into more than 65 languages and used to evaluate over 15 million employees in 169 countries (Harter, Schmidt, & Agrawal, 2009).

In academia, the major difference between the conceptualizations of employee engagement comes from treating employee engagement as a separate distinct construct or as a positive antithesis of burnout (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). Kahn’s (1990) construct on engagement and disengagement represents the research direction that treats employee engagement as an independent concept. Maslach et. al’s (2001) work and the job demands-resources -model (Demerouti et al., 2001) follow the research branch that sees employee engagement as the opposite of burnout. Basing on these different conceptualizations, but also based on their intended usage, the instruments for measuring employee engagements vary. Some instruments are developed solely for the purpose of applied research, namely by consulting firms in pursuit to develop private companies, and others are for scientific purposes. In addition to applied research done by private organizations, employee engagement is studied with scientific instruments such as the “Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI-GS)”, the “Oldenburg Burnout Inventory” and the “Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)”. To answer to the confusion caused by the different conceptualisations of employee engagement there has been a rising interest to come up with a synthesis of the concept. Saks proposed

one of the first ones with his model of antecedents and consequences of employee engagement (Saks, 2006).

The following chapters include a more in-depth introduction to these models and meters to gain a good understanding on how employee engagement has been studied and conceptualized.

2.4.1 Employee engagement as a distinct construct

Employee engagement and disengagement model

In pursuit of understanding more about the context and the conditions in which people engage themselves or disengage by withdrawing or defending their personal selves Kahn (1990) studied summer camp counsellors and architecture firm employees. Basing on his studies he introduced a conceptual model on employee engagement and disengagement that proposed that people can use varying degrees of their physical, cognitive and emotional selves in their work role performances. He suggested that people have dimensions that they are eager to use in their work roles, given that the conditions are appropriate.

According to the model, *personal engagement* can be defined as the harnessing of organizations member's selves to their work roles by employing and expressing themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally. It refers to the behaviour that promotes connections to work and to the people in the work context, to the personal presence and an active role performance. When a person is engaged, his or her self and role exists in a relation where the person drives his or her energies into the role behaviours and uses his or her self-expression and thus brings alive both self and obligatory role. When engaged, people are physically involved in task, cognitively alert and emotionally connected to others in ways that displays their inner self, what they think and feel, their creativity and their beliefs and values. *Personal disengagement* on the other hand can be defined as withdrawal and defending oneself physically, cognitively and emotionally during the work role performance in performing in ways that promotes the lack of connections, physical, cognitive and emotional absence, and passive and incomplete role performance. It refers to actions in which internal energies are not directed at physical, cognitive and emotional labours and defending oneself by hiding one's true identity, thoughts and feelings during the work role performance. Disengaged people are physically uninvolved in tasks, cognitively unvigilant and emotionally disconnected. Psychological conditions that are momentary rather than permanent have an influence on how people behave. If the conditions are met to an

acceptable degree, people have the possibility to engage to the task behaviour. According to Kahn's studies, three psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety and availability foster personal engagement. (ibid.)

Psychological meaningfulness stems from task and role characteristics and work interactions, in situations where a person feels worthwhile, useful and valuable. The task characteristics that promote meaningfulness can be described as challenging, clearly delineated, varied, creative, and somewhat autonomous. Roles can bring with them status or power to influence, and with that a feeling of being valued and needed. The key aspect in how much meaningfulness the role can bring was the amount to which people perceived themselves as important or unimportant in the eyes of others, and eventually to a sense of meaningfulness. Work interactions can promote meaningfulness when the working relationships are rewarding and characterized as being mutually appreciative, dignifying, and respectful and involved positive feedback. (ibid.)

Psychological safety is characterized by feelings of being able to show ones' true self without a feeling of negative repercussions to one's self-image, status of career due to their personal engagement. Situations that promote trust are predictable, consistent, clear and nonthreatening. Psychological safety is influenced mostly by interpersonal relationships, group and intergroup dynamics, management style and process and organizational norms. Psychological safety is fostered through supportive and trusting relationships and in managerial environment that allows people to share ideas, to try and fail without consequences. In some situations, the difference of position and power reflects the threats perceived. Relationships with peers can be seen as less threatening and stifling than relationships between members from higher hierarchical positions. The group and intergroup dynamics are influenced by the unacknowledged and/or unconscious roles that individuals have assumed. The roles inflicted popularity, respect and authority, they felt safe or unsafe, and influenced on the level of engagement people experienced. The roles are influenced by the tenure within the firm; there might be some conflicting elements between the new and the old members within the organization. Supportive, resilient and clarifying management styles and processes promoted psychological safety. A working environment where employees have some degree of control over their work and an atmosphere that allows creativity endorses such a psychological safety. On the other hand, through managerial behaviours that are unpredictable, inconsistent and hypercritical an atmosphere of fear and disengagement is likely to be promoted. Finally, organizational norms promote the

boundaries within which the role performances should fit in. (ibid.) According to May et al. (2004) norms are stronger if they are seen as ¹⁾ having influence on group's survival, ²⁾ a method on increasing the predictability of behaviour within the group, ³⁾ a way to avoid embarrassing interpersonal problems within the group, and ⁴⁾ a way to promote the central values of the group and as a tool to clarify the distinctive identity of the group. People that follow the generally accepted ways of working and behaving have a higher tendency to experience psychological safety than those that don't abide to them. Deviation from norms, or even the possibility to do so, particularly in positions with low status and leverage might be a cause of anxiety and frustration. (May et al. 2004; Kahn, 1990)

Psychological availability refers to the sense of having psychological, emotional and physical resources to personally engage at a given time depending on their work and personal aspects of their lives. Physical and emotional energy, individual insecurity and personal lives posed as distractions to psychological availability. The physical and emotional energy is immediately affected by their personal working environments, difficulties or challenges in the work itself, and demands of the people around. Individual security is affected by how people feel about their work and their status and thus the way they can express themselves. Insecurities can cause distraction to energies that could otherwise be directed at personal engagement. Lack of self-confidence, particularly amongst the new, low status members of the organization, can also for a part of insecurity. Insecurity can also portray as people are not sure of their fit with the organization, its values and its goals. Also, personal lives sometimes caused such distractions that the energy level disposable for working lives and role was depleted and thus affected psychological availability. On the contrary, sometimes the events in personal lives gives people the opportunity to draw on energies generated outside their working environments. (Kahn, 1990)

Continuing from Kahn's work

Kahn's work aroused only a limited amount of interest in academia after it was published (Saks & Gruman, 2014) however, some exception existed that continued his work. For instance, Rothbard (2001) was motivated from Kahn's (1990) work and defined role engagement as having two dimensions, the attention and the absorption. By attention, she referred to the cognitive availability and the amount of time a person spends thinking about the role. By absorption she referred to being engrossed in a role and the intensity of the focus towards a role. In empirical tests by May et al. (2004) the engagement and disengagement

model proved that psychological meaningfulness, safety and availability were related to employee engagement. Their tests further indicated that job enrichment and role fit positively predicted meaningfulness. Rewarding co-worker and supportive supervisory relations were positively related to safety whilst adherence to co-worker roles and self-consciousness were negative predictors to safety. Finally, the tests showed that physical, cognitive and emotional resources available were positive predictors of availability while outside activities were negative predictors. (May et al., 2004; Saks, 2006)

Table 1 Employee engagement and disengagement

Condition	Categories	Antecedents / Affecting items
Psychological Meaningfulness	Task characteristics Role characteristics Work interactions	Challenging, clearly delineated, varied, creative, and autonomous tasks Roles importance (status or power) Mutually appreciative, dignifying, and respectful relationships Person-job fit Positive feedback
Psychological safety	Interpersonal relationships Group and intergroup dynamics Management style and process Organizational norms	Ability to self-expression Supportive and trusting relationships Supervisor relations Supportive managerial environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepting to failure • Welcoming to ideas and creativity • Diversity accepting atmosphere Clear managerial processes Autonomy
Psychological availability	Physical and emotional energy Individual insecurity Personal lives	Working environment Challenges and difficulties at work Physical, emotional and cognitive resources Social demands Perceptions about one's work and status Lack of self-confidence Uncertainty of fit to organization, its values and goals

(adapted from Kahn, 1990 and May et al. 2004)

2.4.2 Employee engagement as a positive antithesis for burnout

An alternative approach to Kahn's (1990) line on research stemmed from the rising popularity of positive psychology. Traditionally psychology has focused more on the negative, meaning ill-health and malfunctions rather than on human strengths and optional functioning (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). Thus, there were more studies on burnout than on employee engagement, and also more tools for measuring the former rather than the latter. These measurement tools included for instance the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1997) and its more developed version the MBI-General Survey

(Maslach et al., 1997; Demerouti et al., 2001) and the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) (Demerouti et al. 2001) which all initially aimed at evaluating burnout (Maslach et al., 1997).

In the MBI burnout was defined as a psychological syndrome that consists of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur whilst doing some kind of “people work”. This results in a ¹⁾ inability to give of themselves at a psychological level after their emotional resources are worn-out, ²⁾ depersonalization which shows as negative, cynical attitudes and feelings towards service recipients in addition to ³⁾ the negative perceptions of self-worth and personal accomplishments at work. (Maslach & Jackson, 1981) In OLBI, exhaustion is defined as a consequence of strains or demands that can be affective (as operationalized in MBI and MBI-GS) but also physical or cognitive. Disengagement in OLBI refers to distancing oneself from one’s work, compared in MBI and MBI-GS where distancing referred to emotional distancing from service recipients. In OLBI, disengagement is linked to negative attitude towards the object of work, work content and work in general but also including attitudes towards recipients and the relationship between the employee and the job, regarding engagement and identification. (Demerouti et al., 2001)

According to Maslach and Leiter (2008), engagement can be defined in the terms of the same three dimensions of burnout but on the positive end of the spectrum instead of the negative. Basing on this conceptualisation, engagement consists of high energy (opposite of exhaustion), strong involvement (instead of cynicism) and a sense of efficacy (instead of inefficacy) (ibid.). As a natural consequence of this conceptualization the MBI-GS can thus be used to measure engagement (Maslach & Leiter, 2008; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010) with low scores on cynicism and exhaustion and high scores on efficacy (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). However, Demerouti et al. (2001) have criticised, that both versions of the MBI are flawed by the same reason, which is that the items are phrased negatively or positively according to the category; meaning that the items in cynicism and exhaustion are worded negatively and professional efficacy items are worded positively. Compared to the MBI the OLBI includes both negatively and positively worded items, making it a better tool to assess employee engagement (Demerouti et al., 2001).

Table 2 Maslach's dimensions of burnout and engagement

Condition	Categories	Antecedents
Burnout	Exhaustion Cynicism Professional efficacy	Overload of work Mismatch of job fit (e.g. Lack of skills or interest) Insufficient control or authority Lack of rewards (financial, social and internal) Lacking of positive connection and supportive community, perceptions of unfairness in the workplace, conflicting values
Engagement	High energy Strong involvement Sense of efficacy	Sustainable workload Feelings of choice and control Appropriate recognition and reward Supportive work community, fairness and justice Meaningful and valued work

(adapted from Maslach, et al. 1997 and 2001, and Saks, 2006)

The job demands-resources model

Job demands-resources (JD-R) model was developed basing on earlier studies on burnout, the development of fatigue and on the other hand theories about health promotion and maintenance that have been proven to have an effect on exhaustion or disengagement in different occupational groups. The model indicates that working conditions can be categorised into job demands and job resources that are differentially related to certain outcomes. Job demands are connected with the physical sociological and organizational aspects of work that require sustained mental or physical efforts. These efforts associate job demands with some physiological and psychological costs. (Demerouti et al., 2001) Job demands can include items such as environmental stressors (working environment, heat, noise, time and work pressures and work load (Demerouti et al., 2001; Hakanen & Roodt, 2010), emotional demands of client work, role ambiguity, conflicts and overload (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Hakanen & Roodt, 2010). Job demands aren't always negative, but they may become stressors if meeting the required performance level requires great efforts (Hakanen & Roodt, 2010).

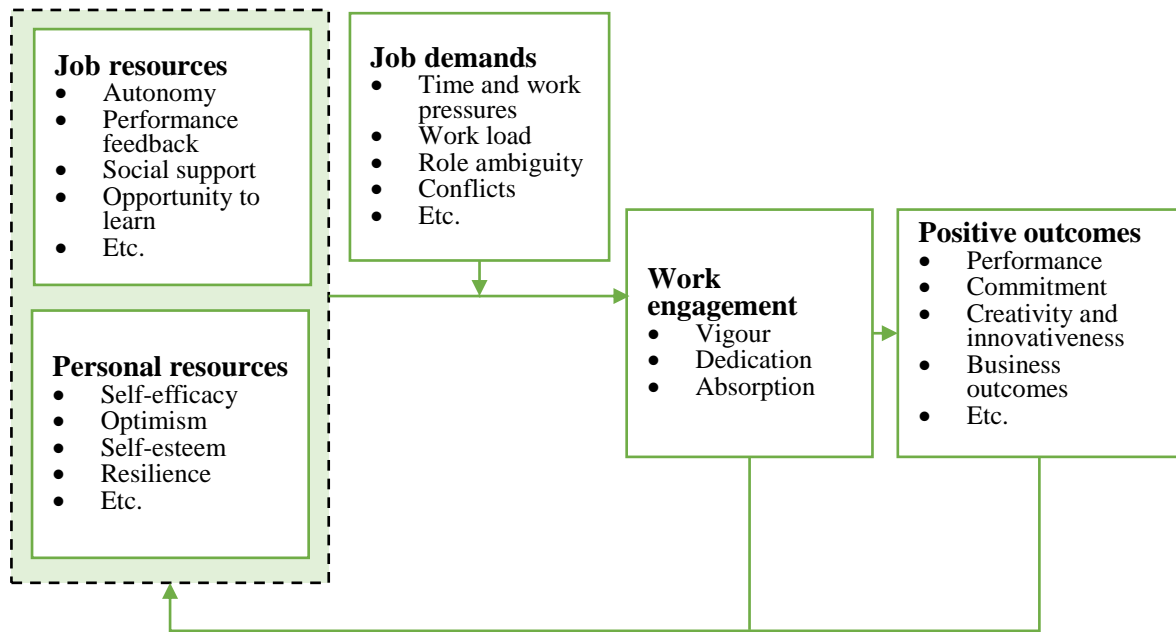
Contrariwise, job resources are connected with physical, psychosocial, social and organizational aspects of a job that can have an effect on either achieving ones' work goals, reduce job demands and/or stimulate personal growth and development (Demerouti et al., 2001). Job resources can be divided into different levels, such as organisation, organization

of work, task and social relations. For instance, job resources that are to do with compensation and benefits, career opportunities and job security are linked with the organization as such (Hakanen & Roodt, 2010), whereas supportive working environment, team climate in addition to family and peer groups are linked with interpersonal matters and social relations (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Hakanen & Roodt, 2010). Job resources that are connected with organization of work include aspects such as job control, role clarity and participation in decision making (Demerouti et al., 2001). And finally, performance feedback, task variety, autonomy, task identity and task significance are linked with job resources that stem from the task itself (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Hakanen & Roodt, 2010).

Job resources play an intrinsic motivational role due to the fact that they encourage personal growth, learning and development, but also extrinsic motivational role, as they are instrumental in achieving work goals (Bakker, 2011). Therefore, job resources are not only important to deal with job demands, but they are also necessary in their own right (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). In addition, employees who work in a resourceful environment have the ability to perform their tasks without the need to invest excessive efforts, and thus feel less tired after the task is performed (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2007). The model proposes that job resources and job demands are negatively correlated (Hakanen & Roodt, 2010) and that high job demands and low job resources create an environment where burnout can develop. On the other hand, high job resources with either low or high job demands are likely to predict high motivation and engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). High job demands drain employee's physical and mental resources resulting in burnout (exhaustion and disengagement) and eventually negative health-related outcomes. This can occur through ¹⁾ demanding aspects of work that lead to constant overtaxing and finally exhaustion and through ²⁾ lack of resources which complicates the meeting of job demands, which leads to withdrawing behaviour and in the long-term, to disengagement from work. On the other hand, job resources work as a breeding ground for engagement, and additionally commitment and performance (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Hakanen & Roodt, 2010). Job resources work as a buffer in situations where job demands are high, and work as a booster for work engagement even in demanding work situations. They are particularly important in highly stressful conditions. (Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti, & Xanthopoulou, 2007)

Even though the job-demands resources -model was first developed for burnout the theory that saw work engagement as a positive opposite of burnout led to the usage of JD-R model on employee engagement as well. As of today, the job-demands resources model is the most commonly used theoretical framework on engagement than any other (Hakanen & Roodt, 2010). As said, originally job demands-resources -model is based on the health impairment and motivation promoting process that is affected by work characteristics. However, a study by Sonnentag (2003) indicated, that there are also non-work related factors that enhance employee engagement. Her study showed that day-level recovery during leisure-time had a positive relation to engagement and eventually proactive behaviour. Thus, a conception of personal resources was incorporated into the original job demands-resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2008) in a way that personal resources mediated job resources and engagement (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). Personal resources differ from personality traits and temperaments but are instead more to do with the aspects of self that can be linked to resiliency (Hobfoll et al., 2003). Furthermore, personal resources can be understood as states of self that can develop over time, they can be developed and managed in pursuit toward an improved work performance (Hakanen & Roodt, 2010).

On the other hand, according to the conservation of resources (COR) theory people have an inner and learned drive to create, foster, conserve and protect both the quantity and quality of their resources (Gorgievski & Hobfoll, 2008). The main idea of COR theory is that a person's key resources are linked with either to well-being and survival or to the process of creating or maintaining the level of the key resources. Consequently, COR theory defines three conditions under which stress occurs: ¹⁾ when a person is in risk of losing their key resources, ²⁾ when a person's key resources are lost, or ³⁾ when a person is not successful in achieving key resources after significantly investing resources. (ibid.) To put it shortly, when people face hardships they mobilize their remaining resources to counterbalance and to confront the challenges to overcome them (Hobfoll et al., 2003).



(Bakker et al., 2007)

Figure 2 Job demands-resources model on work engagement

The job demands-resources model has been criticised based on the content of the variables in the boxes of the model, work-based identity issues in the model and the model itself (Hakanen & Roodt, 2010). The criticism specifies that more focus should be paid on the effects of leadership and employee interaction on engagement and the different levels and the importance of certain job resources in different contexts. Additionally, the outcomes of the job demands-resources model should be studied in-depth in the future. Hakanen and Roodt (2010) also bring forward the idea of challenge and hindrance stressors that could be made more clear in the job demands-resources model. Crawford, LePine and Rich (2010) defined challenge stressors as those demands that have the potential to promote personal growth or future gains, through for instance high levels of job responsibility. Challenge stressors provides an employee an opportunity to learn, achieve and demonstrate their competencies that tend to get rewarded in the future. Hindrance stressors on the other hand are those stressors that potentially prevent personal growth and learning and goal attainment such as role conflicts or ambiguity, organizational politics or conflicts. These demands are generally seen by the employees as constraints or barriers that unnecessarily hinder the progress towards goals and rewards that are possible to achieve if a person is evaluated as an effective performer. (ibid.)

Table 3 Job demands-resources model antecedents

Condition	Categories	Antecedents
Job resources	Organization Interpersonal and social relations Organization of work Task	Salary, job security and career opportunities Social support (e.g. supervisors, team climate, family and peers) and coaching Control, role clarity Participation in decision making Autonomy Task variety, identity and significance Opportunities to learn, performance feedback
Personal resources		Self-efficacy Resilience Organizational based self-esteem Optimism Positive work-home interaction
Job demands	Environmental stressors Quantitative, emotional, and cognitive demands	Working environment (e.g. heat, noise) Time and work pressures, work load Client work, conflicts Role ambiguity

2.4.3 Towards a synthesis of employee engagement

Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement

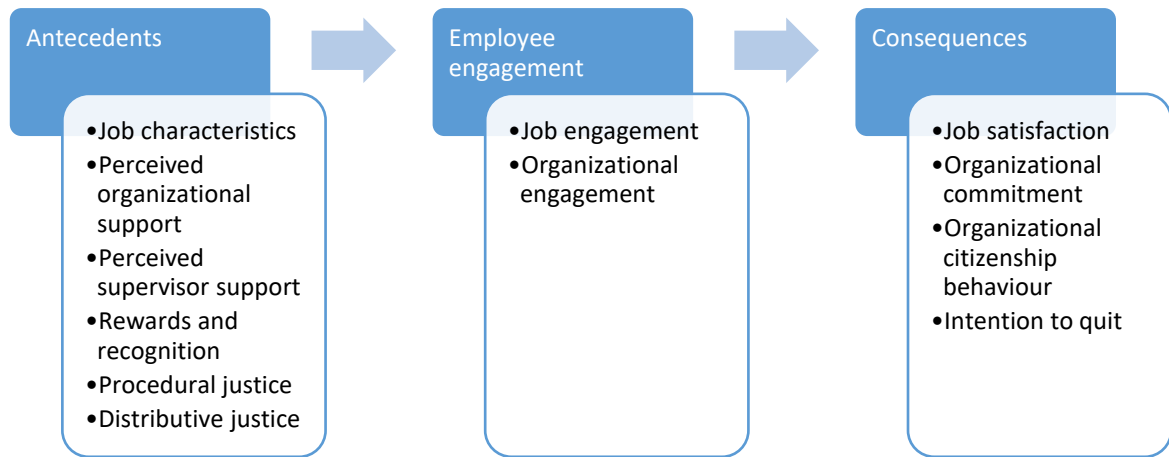
Saks (2006) acknowledged that the previous work done by the two research branches on employee engagement contain the psychological conditions necessary for employee engagement, but criticized that lack an explanation to why people respond to these antecedents with different levels of engagement and suggested that social exchange theory (SET) could explain the rationale better.

Social exchange theories basic assumption is that a series of interactions generate obligations between members who are mutually interdependent from each other and each other's actions. Furthermore, these relationships evolve in time into trusting, loyal and mutual commitments, given that certain rules (i.e. reciprocity) of exchange are followed. Social exchange relationships can evolve in situations, where employers have the best interest of their employees at hearts and take care of them which reciprocally results in financial benefits. Thus, social exchange relationship acts as a mediator between employer and employee in a strong, advantageous and fair relationship which results in positive attitudes and effective work behaviour. (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) Another way of understanding the social exchange theory is through the concept of psychological contract, which reflects the employee's perspective of reciprocity. The perception of reciprocity is

linked to the gains and outcomes from the organization which are expected to be proportional with the efforts invested in the organization (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010).

Thus, according to Saks (2006) individuals can repay their organization through different levels of engagement. He stated that employees choose to engage themselves, but also the level to what extent they engage themselves as a response to the resources provided for them by the organization. Moreover, varying the level of job performance is more difficult as it is the basis of general rules of exchange at work, meaning performance and the economic benefits received as a compensation for it. Thus, employees can repay the resources and benefits by bringing themselves fully into one's work and dedicating their cognitive, emotional and physical resources in a profound way. (ibid.) Saks followed Kahn's (1990) original construction of employee engagement, and combined it with the theoretical foundation provided by the SET. This resulted in a new way of seeing Kahn's definition of engagement as employee's obligation to bring themselves more deeply into their role performance as a bay pack for the different kinds of resources received from the organization. If the organization fails to deliver adequate resources, the employees are more prone to withdraw and disengage from the roles they fulfil in the organization. Thus, the extent of cognitive, emotional and physical resources to which an individual is willing to devote in the performance of one's work roles is dependent on the economic and socioeconomic resources received from the organization.

Saks (2006) proposed a model of antecedents and consequences of engagement. He chose to use both job and organization engagements as the core of the model following Kahn's (1990) conceptualization of engagement as role related. Saks (2006) reasoned that the two most dominant roles in the organization are the members work roles and their role as a member of the organization. This also follows Rothbard's (2001) and May et al. (2004) notion, that people have different roles within an organization and studies on employee engagement should take that as a consideration. As to identify the antecedents for employee engagement, Saks (2006) utilized both Kahn's (1990) and Maslach et al.'s (1997) models.



(Saks, 2006)

Figure 3 A model of antecedents and consequences of employee engagement

The apparent driving force behind the success of employee engagement is that it promises positive outcomes for the organizations (Saks 2006; Saks and Gruman, 2014). However, employee engagement is an individual-level construct so in order to achieve organizational outcomes there needs to be positive individual outcomes first (Saks, 2006). Kahn's (1990) original study didn't include outcomes, but later on Kahn (1992) proposed, that people's behaviour result outcomes both in individual level (quality of people's own work and how they experience it) and organizational level (growth and productivity of organizations). Maslach et al.'s (2008) model sees employee engagement as mediating variable between six work conditions and outcomes, such as withdrawal, lowered level of performance, job satisfaction and commitment. Following the exchange rules of SET when both employee and employer abide to the rules, the result will be more trusting and loyal relationship with mutual commitments (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Accordingly, Saks (2006) stated that employee engagement is positively related to organizational commitment, job satisfaction and negatively related to intention to quit. Furthermore, organizational engagement is positively related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviour and negatively related to intention to quit.

2.4.4 Summary of the models and meters of employee engagement

As can be seen, the conceptualization of employee engagement varies in several dimensions; from research to practice, and from schools of thought in regards of engagement being a separate construct or the positive antithesis of burnout. And understandably, the meters to study engagement varies also depending on the conceptualization but also for what purpose

they are meant to be used. The models and meters presented in this study all have their virtues. Gallup's Workplace Audit and others originating from practice and mainly from business consulting firms have developed engagement mainly towards a management tool. Its meters focus on evaluating something that can be developed with different corrective actions by the management of the company in order to create change. Kahn's (1990) model on employee engagement and disengagement defined the psychological conditions of availability, safety and meaningfulness that May et al. (2004) tested and confirmed that they are linked with employee engagement. The key attributes of Kahn's work were the studies on the psychological conditions thus adding theoretical thinking into engagement.

Maslach et al. (1997) designed the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) and Demerouti et al., (2001) the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory to measure the burnout syndrome. Concerning employee engagement, the developers both posited that it is solely a positive antithesis of burnout and thus can be measured by the same instrument. Later on, Demerouti et al. (2001) introduced the job demands-resources model basing on studies on burnout and on health maintenance and promotion. The model posits that work conditions can be categorised into job demands and job resources that are differentially related to different outcomes. Sonnentag's (2003) studies indicated that there are also non-work related aspects that influence employee engagement, thus personal resources were incorporated into the job demands-resources model. Saks (2006) concurred with Kahn and Maslach on the psychological conditions that are necessary for employee engagement, but still incorporated the rationale of social exchange theory (SET) and suggest that it would give a better answer to why people respond with different levels of engagement to certain conditions. His point of view was that employees choose to engage themselves, but furthermore they choose the level to what extent they engage themselves in a form of response to the resources that are provided by the organization. Through his theory, Saks came up with the model of antecedents and consequences of employee engagement that utilized both Kahn's (1990) and Maslach's (1997) models.

In the next page a table 4 is presented which summarizes Kahn's (1990), Saks's (2006) and Maslach et al.'s (1997 and 2001) and Demerouti et al.'s (2001) work of the antecedents of employee engagement that the different theories and models contained.

Table 4 The antecedents of employee engagement

Condition (Kahn, 1990)	Categories	Antecedents by Kahn (1990) and Saks (2006)	Antecedents by Maslach, et al., 1997 and 2001, and Demerouti et al., 2001
Psychological Meaningfulness	Task characteristics Role characteristics Work interactions Rewards and recognition	Work load and control Challenging work, variety, personal discretion and opportunity to use different skills and make important contributions. Roles importance (status or power) Mutually appreciative, dignifying, and respectful relationships Autonomy Job enrichment Person-job fit (Positive) Feedback	Sustainable workload (JR*) Task variety, identity and significance (JR) Opportunities to learn (JR) Feelings of choice and control (JR) Meaningful and valued work (JR) Appropriate recognition and reward (JR) Role clarity (JR) vs. ambiguity (JD**) Autonomy (JR) Salary and career opportunities (JR) Mismatch of job fit (e.g. Lack of skills or interest) (JD) Performance feedback (JR)
Psychological safety	Interpersonal relationships Group and intergroup dynamics Management style and process Organizational norms Perceived organizational support (POS) and perceived supervisor support (PSS) Distributive and procedural justice	Ability to self-expression Supportive and trusting relationships (Care) Supervisor relations Supportive social and managerial environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepting to failure • Welcoming to ideas and creativity • Diversity accepting atmosphere • Openness Clear managerial processes Autonomy Predictable and consistent processes and rewards (fairness and equality)	Supportive work community (JR) Fairness and justice (JR) Social support (e.g. supervisors, team climate, family and peers) and coaching (JR) Participation in decision making (JR) Job security (JR)
Psychological availability	Physical and emotional energy Individual insecurity Personal lives	Working environment Challenges and difficulties at work Physical, emotional and cognitive resources Social demands Perceptions about one's work and status Lack of self-confidence Uncertainty of fit to organization, its values and goals Personal lives	Working environment (e.g. heat, noise) (JD) Time and work pressures (JD) Client work (JD) Conflicts (JD) Self-efficacy (PR***) Resilience (PR) Organizational based self-esteem (PR) Optimism (PR) Positive work-home interaction (PR)

*Job resources **Job demands ***Personal resources

However, it is not enough to have an understanding of what are the antecedents of employee engagement. It is mutually important to understand what can be done to enhance employee engagement but also what are the benefits of it to individuals and organizations. In the next chapter, different possibilities to enhancing employee engagement are presented.

2.5 Enhancing employee engagement

Enhancing and development of employee engagement brings benefits to the organization, but for the employees alike. Organizations operating in the continuously changing environment, organizations need employees that are not only healthy (symptom free) but also engaged in their work and the organizational values and goals. Individual employees that are engaged are encouraged to realize their full potential and given the opportunity to flourish at work. Development of employee engagement can be approached from different angles. One way of approaching it is from the angle of “positive interventions”, where employees themselves pursuit towards flourishing and thriving at work and organizations promote a working environment, that supports this development. (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010) Another way is to approach it from an angle of performance management perspective, with employee engagement at the heart of it (Gruman & Saks, 2011).

2.5.1 Positive interventions

“Positive interventions” are meant for improving employee engagement, health and well-being, and are directed at the entire workforce. Positive interventions are based on the thought that development is a long-term mission that requires sustainable and continuous efforts. The purpose of the interventions is not to replace traditional occupational health care, but to widen the scope from treating existing and potential diseases to improving the well-being of the entire organization. The positive intervention strategies are divided into individual based and organization based techniques. These strategies are introduced in the next chapters. (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010)

The organizational based interventions

The organizational based interventions give a valuable opportunity for cooperation between occupational health professionals and human resources management. Generally speaking, the occupational health side has been the responsibility of occupational health care and organisational health the responsibility of human resources management. Occupational health and organizational health are co-dependant meaning that by promoting one the other is affected as well and vice versa. This effect is sometimes called “the gain spiral”. This

means that positively affecting in job and personal recourses may result through work engagement in various positive outcomes, such as extra-role performance in addition to fostering an environment where engagement can reach high levels. At the organizational level, the strategies focus on ¹⁾ assessment and evaluation of employees, ²⁾ (re)designing and changing workplaces, ³⁾ enhancing transformational leadership, ⁴⁾ work training, and ⁵⁾ management of careers. (Ibid.)

Assessing and evaluating employees is done with the main purpose of having the right people in right positions (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010). How strongly a person is connected with one's work and the organization as a whole, can also be connected to the level of work engagement. In settings where a strong connection exists between the person and the values promoted by the organisation, work engagement can prosper. In this regard, the idea of a fit between a person and a job and the organization is important to understand. According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2010) the person-job fit comprises of two dimensions. Firstly, the demands-abilities fit reflect on the knowledge skills and abilities a person holds compared to the demands of the job itself. Secondly, the needs-supplies fit echoes from the needs and desires of a person compared to what is provided by the job. On the whole, when the characteristics of a person and the requirements of the job are highly aligned, high job satisfaction can be experienced. The person-organization fit, on the other hand, comprises of the compatibility of a person to the entire organization. A person can either have the same values as the organization (supplementary fit) or the needs of the person and the organization are aligned (complementary fit). (ibid.) Personnel assessment and evaluation can be seen as increasing identification, motivation and commitment from the perspective of the organization, but also about personal and professional development, from the employee's point of view (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010).

(Re)designing and changing workplaces is done with the aim of serving two purposes. Firstly, from the occupational health perspective it aims to reduce the exposure to psychosocial risks and secondly, from the human resources perspective it aims to increase employee motivation. (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010) Following the idea of job demands-resources model (Demerouti et al., 2001) the total elimination of job stressors isn't ideal because it would eliminate job challenges. Instead the focus should be paid on the motivation potential of job resources as they stimulate learning and development of employees and thus personal growth. Also, the lack of organisational resources has a detrimental effect on both employees' motivation and performance. Work changes such as job rotation, special projects

or transfers are also a method for increasing employee engagement. The probability of increasing employee engagement is higher when employee-job fit is high, and the person has necessary competencies to meet the challenges of the new position. (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010)

Transformational leadership promotes a climate where both individual and collective engagement may thrive (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010). Interestingly, in situations where a team-level the level of engagement is high, it is possible to transfer engagement from the team to individual employees indicating the contagious nature of employee engagement (Bakker, van Emmerik, & Euwema, 2006). Furthermore, employee engagement is a collective phenomenon and that team members may feel engaged when they are closely collaborating to accomplish particular tasks or mutual goals. This indicates that the team leader may have a positive effect on both individual and collective engagement levels depending on their way of managing the team. (Salanova, Llorens, Cifre, Martínez, & Schaufeli, 2003)

Work training is traditionally used to enhance the level of employee engagement. However, according to Schaufeli and Salanova (2010) the work training programs should be more directed at personal growth and development instead of being solely directed by the content of the training. They promote the idea that building efficacy beliefs i.e. believing that you can is central for the promotion of employee engagement through work training. Efficacy beliefs work also as a self-motivating mechanism; as an employee evaluates their own competence they start to set new goals that motivate them thus activating and mobilizing extra effort to achieve these goals. Engagement can thus be both an antecedent to self-efficacy but also a consequence after a successful goal attainment. Successful training programs not only focus on the delivery of new information; it also focuses on the practical experience side to foster *mastery experiences* or role models of good performance for *vicarious experiences*. Furthermore, a good training program should use *verbal persuasion* by including coaching and encouragement and on the other side *manage emotional states* by reducing fear or rejection or failure. (ibid.)

Career management amongst employees has traditionally favoured lifelong job security, and vertical, upward mobility. However, the current trends in the organizations has affected the possibilities to this type of career development. Thus, as a fixed career path in which each step requires pre-defined expertise is not a self-evident possibility, today job market is much

more unstable and requires employees much more coping than before. Employees have to take responsibility and take their own initiative to continuously develop themselves both professionally and personally in order to remain employable. By remaining employable makes an employee more fit and able to do the job and reversely by planning their career and successfully selecting those jobs that provide opportunities to professional and personal development both might lead to high levels of engagement. Nevertheless, the most important thing for the employee is to remain engaged and to keep developing themselves throughout their career. (ibid.)

Individual based interventions

The individual strategies include behavioural strategies, cognitive strategies and volitional strategies. The purpose of these strategies is to promote happiness and thus also employee engagement. The main purpose is that they are applied to work settings, but they can have even more wider, existential meaning that involve the person's core values, interests and preferences, and ultimately knowing yourself. (ibid.)

The behavioural strategies promote leading a meaningful life where one can practice and develop their virtues (strengths, talents and potentials) and living an authentic life. In addition, they promote interpersonal behaviours such as being kind to others, expressing gratitude, learning to forgive, sharing good news, and taking care of social relationships that strongly involve also the surrounding people at work from colleagues and supervisors to customers. The benefits of these interpersonal strategies are the fact that they are likely to elicit positive attitudes in others, which they are likely to return in respect with kindness and by offering help and assistance. Additionally, they can also improve the social climate at work by fostering group cohesion and team spirit, resolving conflicts and increase loyalty. (ibid.)

The cognitive strategies involve mindfulness, where the person's full presence is active in situations that are characterized with pleasure and joy, but also gratitude towards positive life experiences by contemplating how the events have enriched the person's life. Furthermore, by cognitively cultivating optimism, a person can choose to believe in a bright future, and the possibility to achieve the goals set in life and at work. Unlearning to use a pessimistic explanation of situations and replacing those deliberately with an optimistic explanation can be quite easily used in work situations. Because of their confidence, optimists are more likely to invest essential efforts to achieve success. (ibid.)

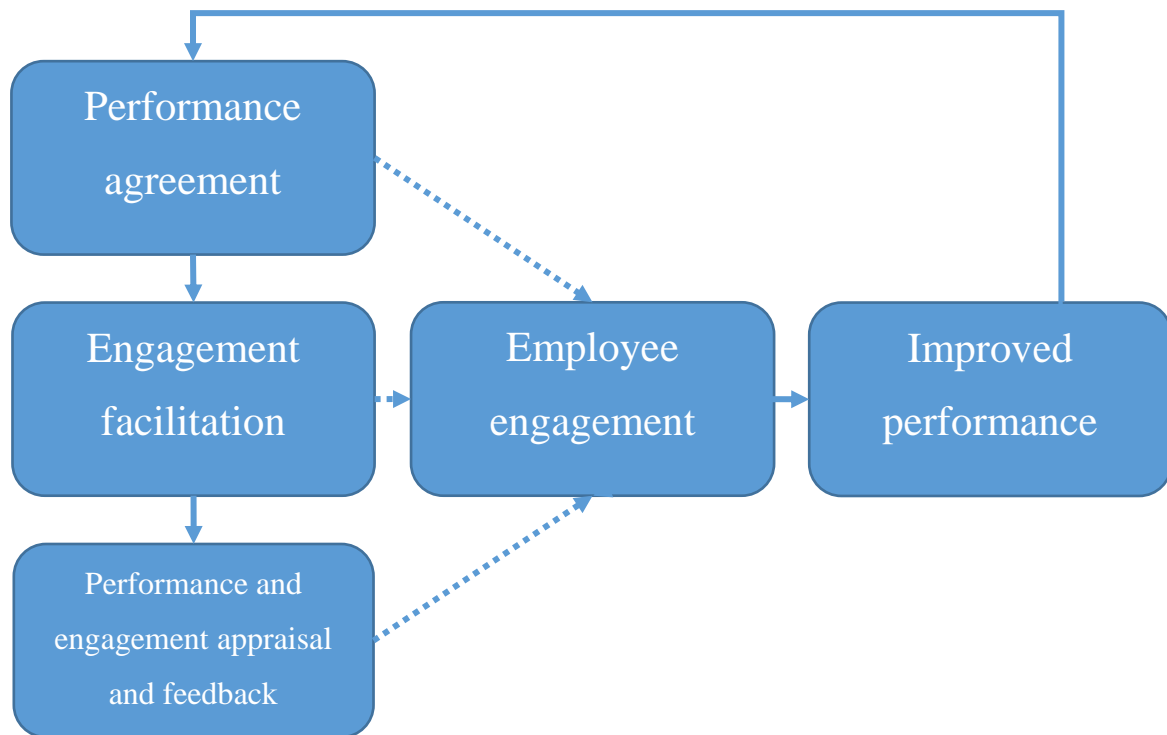
The volitional strategies include setting and pursuing personal goals and increasing resilience. Achieving personal and work goals is important because it provides a sense of purpose, boosts self-esteem and self-efficacy and encourages social relationships. Achieving goals can provide intrinsic motivation, be rooted in one's core interests and be harmonious in a way that they are complementary rather than conflicting in person's life. They can be sub-goals on the road towards a higher-level goal. Achieving goals are related to enhanced well-being, and personal growth, given that the goals are related to one's true interests and values. Furthermore, through increased resilience, people that are faced with major difficulties at work and in life can experience personal growth, strengthening and even thriving through a belief that they can overcome these challenges. Resilience can be increased through finding meaning in hardships and supported with adequate job resources, like supportive working environment and job control and mastery motivation such as optimism and self-efficacy. (Ibid.)

2.5.2 The Engagement Management Model

Gruman and Saks (2011) worked towards finding solutions on how to promote the engagement of employees. They worked basing their views on existing models on performance management processes to accumulate a model called "the engagement management model" that integrates employee engagement into performance management process. The model begins from a performance agreement to outline the expectations the employer has from the employee. As the word "agreement" indicates the emphasis is on negotiations and a mutual understanding to foster engagement. The negotiations should also include the review of the psychological contract to facilitate the development of engagement. Engagement facilitation is the second component of the model. It focuses on the job (re)design, leadership and supervisory support, coaching and training in order to facilitate the development of engagement on the employees. The third component of the model is performance and engagement appraisal and feedback. It focuses on the perceptions of justice and trust as the key drivers of engagement compared to the traditional view of performance appraisals on rating accuracy. These three preceding components contribute in turn to employee engagement and thus, to improved performance. Although the model includes a sequence of steps it still emphasizes an ongoing and continuous process. (ibid.)

Gruman and Saks (2011) emphasize that the performance management practices that build up the psychological conditions indicated by Kahn (1990) can be arranged in the form of job demands-resources (JD-R) model (Demerouti et al., 2001). In other words, performance

management processes should foster an environment where employees have the resources that lead to the three psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety and availability that are associated with higher levels of engagement. By combining performance management processes, Kahn's psychological conditions and the job demands-resources model, Gruman and Saks (2011) presented that they have created a motivational process that is both conceptually and empirically connected to employee engagement and performance.



(Gruman & Saks, 2011)

Figure 4 The Engagement Management Model

2.6 Summary

There has been and still is a debate going on what is meant by the concept of employee engagement, nonetheless, it is still mutually understood that it brings benefits to both organizations and individuals. Engaged employees that are healthy and engaged in their work, the values and goals of the organization is one of the most valuable assets for the company when faced with challenges of the continuously changing operating environment (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010). There are surely many ways organizations can operate in a way that employee engagement can flourish. A way to approach this is through the angle of “positive interventions” where employees are encouraged to achieve their full potential and they themselves pursuit towards building a working environment where they can succeed and thrive (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010). Another angle for enhancing employee

engagement is a more traditional method or performance management with employee engagement as one of the core goals (Gruman & Saks, 2011).

Even though there are overlapping with some more traditional concepts in academia employee engagement cannot be explained through these concepts alone (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010; Saks, 2006). The main difference between the conceptualization comes from threatening employee engagement as a separate construct or as the positive antithesis of burnout however there is a growing interest towards finding a synthesis for understanding the concept (Saks & Gruman, 2014). For the purpose of this research, a broad description of the concept will be used that defines employee engagement as a unique and desired motivational state that has cognitive, emotional and behavioural components. Employee engagement acts as a mediator between its antecedents (job and personal resources and job demands) and the positive outcomes. (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010; Saks, 2006; Saks & Gruman, 2014) Job resources can be understood as the physical, psychological, social or organizational aspects of a particular job that may have a positive effect on stimulating personal growth and development and achieving work goals. Furthermore, job resources act as buffer against the hindering effect of work demands. (Demerouti et al., 2001). Personal resources are the aspect of the self that can be linked with resiliency (Hobfoll et al., 2003) and they can develop, be developed and managed in the pursuit towards improved work performance (Hakanen & Roodt, 2010). On the other hand, job demands can be understood as the physical, sociological and organisational aspects of a particular job that require sustained physical or mental efforts that affect the level of employee engagement (Demerouti et al., 2001). The positive outcomes can be divided into personal level outcomes, such as individual role performance, growth and development, and the organizational-level outcomes such as improved quality of performance and personal initiative. (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010; Saks, 2006; Saks & Gruman, 2014)

3 Methodology

In the following chapter I will introduce the methodology and aspects that have influenced on the selection of the method used in this study. At first I will introduce the research questions in this study and state why they are important aspects to study about. I will also go through some of the aspects that are out of scope in this study. Secondly, I will shortly introduce the case company, Borealis and the departments of Borealis that have been chosen to participate in this study. Additionally, I will elaborate my own role as an employee of Borealis and how I will take that into considerations whilst conducting a research for my current employer. Thirdly, I will introduce the methods used in the data gathering of this case study and describe the circumstances in which the data had been gathered. Then, I will explain how the naturally occurring data i.e. the documentary materials that already existed in Borealis and data from the interviews are analysed. Lastly, I will discuss about the evaluation of qualitative research and evaluate how well the methods selected for this study fulfil what it aims to answer.

3.1 The research question

Qualitative research aims to discover or reveal unprecedented facts. It is about describing reality, which is diverse and complicated in nature. Qualitative research is characterised by the fact that it aims in a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon through collecting data in real life settings with people as the main source of information. What is considered relevant comes from the data, not from a predefined theoretical proposition or hypothesis. (Hirsjärvi, Remes, & Sajavaara, 1997)

The research questions for this study are as follows:

Q1. How has employee engagement been developed in Borealis during the past six years?

- a. How do the employees perceive the actions done to support its development?
- b. How does it show in work related surveys during the past six years?

Q2. What kind of meanings the employees of Borealis give to employee engagement and how does it affect their work and how the work is done?

The purpose of this study is to gain a thorough understanding of the real-life practices used to develop employee engagement but also to understand the perceptions the employees have about these actions. The viewpoint used in this study is from human resources management combined with a retrospective view that allows me to grasp an understanding also of the possible affects these development practices have had on the views of the employees as they

are seen in the work-related surveys. My goal is to give voice to the employees, and to get a view of what kind of meanings they give to employee engagement. Through this approach, I can provide valuable information to Borealis and to others by presenting additional and by its nature, richer understanding regarding employee engagement in addition to the workplace surveys that are done on a regular basis.

3.2 Borealis Porvoo as a study context

Borealis is a large international chemicals company which produces base chemicals, plastics raw materials (polyolefins) and solutions in agribusiness. Worldwide, it has 6500 employees of which around 920 are located in Porvoo. (Borealis Polymers Oy, 2015a) As Borealis is my current employer, I have the access to the majority of the data used in this research. However, quite the amount of the data is also user sensitive, such as the People Survey results from different years and departments. As for the purpose of this study, I have been granted an access to the materials that I need by expanding the IT-clearances beyond my current role where it was seen necessary. Through my work in Borealis I had a general idea of the materials related to this project. In addition to this, I have had one person from the Human Resources department, who I cooperated with in searching for additional materials.

The departments that are participating in this study are Materials Handling and Administration with sub-departments of Human Resources (HR), Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) and Product Stewardship (PS). These departments were chosen because they represent two employee groups. Materials Handling (MH) has the majority of its employee from blue collar employee group and all Administration employees are white collars. In addition, the selection was influenced by the desire to keep the department groups equal in size which are approximately 50 people in each.

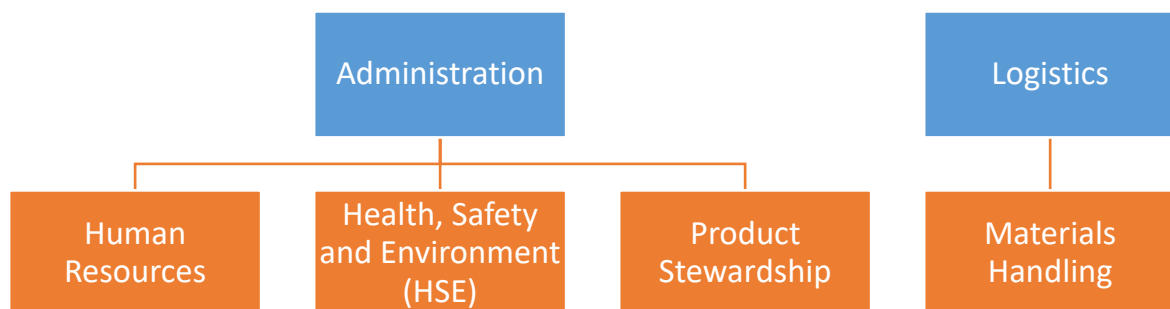


Figure 5 The departments participating in this study

The departments participating in this study have undergone some changes since 2010. The department managers have changed in all of the departments during this period, and in Materials Handling the manager has changed three times. In Product Stewardship, the manager in charge was previously located in Belgium, but now the managerial position is located in Finland. In HR, both the department manager and the person responsible for industrial relations who was also the supervisor of payrolls has changed during the study period. Additionally, Materials Handling has undergone a major change in the shift work system in its packing operations. The packing operators previously worked in continuous 2-shift system, but in 2011 they started to operate in continuous 3-shift system, the so called “12-hour shift”. The 12-hour shift system is commonly used shift system in Borealis and the surrounding Kilpilahti industrial area.

The timeframe for this study was chosen because of the cycle of work-related surveys in Borealis. The People Survey is done every other year for all employees of Borealis but the Work Place Survey only once every six years. The Work Place Survey was conducted in 2010 and in 2015 in Administration and in 2011 in Materials Handling. These surveys shed light on employee engagement in Borealis and are thus an important source of information in this study.

3.3 The role of the researcher vs. role of the employee

This master’s thesis is done in cooperation with Borealis, which is my current employer. It is done in my own expense and from the interest points of myself. What comes to my role as a researcher and doing a master’s thesis for my current employer; the roles of the past, present and the future needs to be taken into account. The main reasons why I wished to do it for my current employer is three-fold. Firstly, it was because I know the people and the practices, which gives me an extraordinary possibility to gather in-depth knowledge concerning the topic of the thesis. Secondly, as I know the company so well, I was quite certain, that there would be some interesting topic concerning human resources management that would be of interest of to myself and also to my employer. And thirdly, as I have had the support from the people within Borealis for my study-leave I wanted to give Borealis something useful in return.

There are clear pros and cons of doing a thesis for a company that I know well. The pros are related to the fact that there is a relatively easy access to data, the people are quite often familiar and the historical understanding of the company and the way it operates is vast. This

also poses the challenge in doing the study. There are already aspects that are taken for granted for myself, which might raise the interests of a researcher without the similar connection to the company. I might miss these themes or items altogether, even if they are right before my eyes, as I can't see them from the viewpoint of an outsider. I might also miss asking the stupid questions that would be asked if the researcher isn't an insider, that might in the end be very valuable for the research. Also, the understanding of the company might easily take me side-tracked as I know what types of material there is available. This means that focusing on the relevant is more of a challenge. Understanding what is available is of course an advantage that an outsider doesn't have, it allows me to gather material that strange researcher wouldn't know to look for. It might also help my understanding what is said in the documentary material, as the company language is already familiar to me, however, this might be a challenge as well as understanding more than is actually said might be something that I need to be aware of.

Knowing the interviewees beforehand, and in some cases, knowing the interviewees very well might also give some presumptions about what the people will tell me during the interviews. I need to be vary of this when conducting the interviews and ask even though I might presume I know the answer already but also, let people talk freely about the subject to gain reliable results from the interviews. Doing the interviews on people I know of might both make it easier to conduct, but it also might raise the alarms of those I will be interviewing. They might think - even though I'm telling them I'm not- that I will be giving the recordings or otherwise disclosing the contents of the interviews to the hands of their supervisors or other members of the staff. For this reason, before the starting of the interviews I described to each interviewee in person the ways this study will be conducted. Through this precaution, I hoped to acquire as open dialogue as possible during the interviews to gain rich data for this research. However, even though this has been taken into consideration it is impossible to be sure whether the respondents shared their deepest thoughts or dreams. Nevertheless, after the interviews were conducted I was very content with the data I gathered through the interviews, given that I am aware that something could be also left unsaid during the sessions. There were occurring themes in the interviews, the interviewees also shared information on challenges and problems they had faced in their work that might affect their level of employee engagement and the interview sessions seemed open and honest. Luckily, I was also fortunate that the findings that I have made are mostly positive. If the results would have proven that everything Borealis does is wrong it

would have put me in a very difficult position on how to report the findings. However, during the analysis and on writing the findings on the report I paid special attention to giving voice to all of my interviewees and bringing forward both the negative and the positive findings. This, in my view, is the only way to take things forward and improve them to the better.

Being reflexive in every stage of the research is crucial. Being reflexive can be understood as bringing transparency of knowledge by careful consideration of how information and knowledge is produced, described and justified (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Thus, even though this study has been started at my suggestion, it is clear, that I am in a position of gratitude towards Borealis. I am grateful they initially hired me in 2008 just before the break of the recession all around the globe after which they also hired my husband six months later, and consequently allowed us to move our lives from middle Finland to Porvoo. Also, they have allowed me to develop professionally during my active employment in the company to the extent which they actively supported me in my application process in Aalto University. In addition to the cooperation during the application process and this master's thesis process, I have been allowed to use Borealis as a study target in other courses as well. Based on this cooperation and support it is easy to say, that gratitude is one of my main emotions towards Borealis. Also, my plans for the future within the company needs to be taken into consideration. As I have acquired new skills and knowledge, and grown as a person, my goal is to advance also in my professional career. The former colleagues, supervisors and management know that I am studying, but they don't know what is the new value added I can bring in to the firm. This puts me in a position of where I need to provide them evidence of my new capabilities. This gratitude added to my career aspirations also means I have a strong bias whilst conducting this research. The work is done for Borealis to both express my gratitude but also to prove my abilities. What does this mean in regards of doing this study? It means that as I am grateful, I need to place special attention to not sugar-coating the results of this research – it wouldn't even be the benefit of anyone participating in this process or reading the results of it. These two roles mentioned above are luckily also intertwined; the need to show how I have evolved also means the need to do my absolute best in this process. This doesn't include foul play and sloppy work; it means hard work to gain results that are beneficial.

3.4 Case study and the methods used in this study

Epistemology and methodology are intertwined, and they are the different sides of the same thing. Epistemology defines the philosophy by which we understand the question of

knowledge and what are its sources and limits. Methodology describes the same in a more practical point of view, by specifically defining the methods that are used in studies to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008)

In this study, I have chosen interpretivism and constructionism as my philosophical ground. According to Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) these philosophical positions are concerned with how people interpret and understand (construct) social events and settings. They posit, that interpretation is vital in analysing any qualitative materials, and that through interpretation no single understanding can or should be achieved, but instead that there are many possible interpretations to be gained from the same material, and all of which might be meaningful. Furthermore, as a philosophical background interpretivism and constructionism posit, that reality is constructed in social settings through language and shared meanings. Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) conclude, that a researches from a constructionist and interpretive point of view, does not only focus on the content of the empirical data, but also on the ways the data was produced through text and language.

This study is done as a single-case study looking at the development of employee engagement over time. However, according to Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) case study research should not be seen as a method, but instead to think of it more as a research strategy or an approach to conduct a study. They continue by explaining, that there are no limits to the quality of the empirical data i.e. qualitative vs. quantitative, and posit that the nature of the research questions and the aim of the study is the decisive factor in choosing the methods of data collection and analysis. Hirsjärvi & Hurme (2000, p. 32) point out, that through using complementary methods the goal is to achieve “density of empirical coverage” i.e. to examine the research topic from different angles. Using multiple methods, often described as triangulation, the interpretability of the research can be enhanced (Hirsjärvi & Hurme, 2000) and the validity of the study can be increased (Hirsjärvi et al., 1997). In this study, two different types of triangulation are used; collecting different types of data and using different types of analysis in the research.

Following the thoughts of Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) about intensive or classic case study research, aim of this study is to view this case from the inside, and to build the case from the perspectives of the people which take part in the research. This is done by giving special weight on interpretation, comparing the case in retrospect of what other researchers have said about the topic in similar settings to see what is unique about the case, and thus

gaining a holistic understanding of it. Furthermore, an element that is seen as important in a case study, is the usage of “thick description”. Thick description can be understood as the detailed and holistic report of the phenomenon that is researched opposed to “thin description” in which only the mere facts are presented (Hirsjärvi & Hurme, 2000). Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008, p. 120) emphasise the complexity of a case study and describe thick description as “a verbalised interpretation that is able to crystallize the reasons behind the rich and multifaceted details of the case”. The role of the researcher is the main interpreter with the power to construct and analyse the case by “*focusing on perspectives, conceptions, experiences, interactions and the self-making processes of the people involved in the study*” (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 120).

3.5 Methods of data collection

3.5.1 Documentary material

The first aim of this study is to gain an understanding of the different ways Borealis has used in order to build its employee engagement and compare this process with the results of different work-related surveys that have been conducted in Borealis during the past six years. Thus, this gives clear guidelines for collection of the data in the first phase of the study. During the first stage the data collection of documentary materials, which consists different archival documents, including, but not limiting to material concerning the work-related surveys and the other regular practices and different special campaign in Borealis. The work-related surveys consisted of the People Survey conducted in 2010, 2012 and 2014 and Work Place Survey was conducted in Administration in 2010 and 2015 and in Materials Handling in 2011. The materials concerning the regular practices of operations in Borealis consisted of for instance values, Borealis People principles, the yearly employee reports among other things in addition to presentation and internal promotion materials to inform the employees of these actions. The special campaigns that were focused on this study consisted of “Case for Change” and “Winning through Excellence” including “Behaviour Excellence” and the “Wellbeing concept”.

Work Place Survey

The Work Place Surveys, WPS is conducted by the occupational health care in all departments of Borealis once in every five years. The WPS consists of health and working conditions surveys in addition to interviews and voluntary health inspections. In addition to the informational gathered from the employees, other necessary information is gathered from

inspections done at the work place, including ergonomic inspections or occupational exposure measurements. Based on the WPS, the participating department in cooperation with occupational health and safety representatives from HSE department and the participating department agree upon improvement plans and a follow up process. The follow up process typically includes yearly follow up meetings to see how the improvement plans have progressed. (Borealis Polymers Oy, 2015b) The survey asks people to evaluate the concrete job and personal resources and job demands in several different questions. It was last conducted in Materials Handling in 2011 and in Administration in 2010 and 2015.

People Survey

The People Survey has been done in Borealis with a frequency of every 2 years since 2004 by an external service provider “Towers Watson”. All employees have been invited to participate in People Survey and the response rate has been relatively high throughout, with 84 % in 2010, 87% in 2012 and 82% in 2014. The purpose of People Survey in Borealis is to collect direct feedback from all employees to enable the possibility to strengthen Borealis, improve the working environment and reinforce employee engagement. As Towers Watson is a global consultancy firm, the survey gives a valuable possibility to compare the results of the survey also externally. (Borealis Polymers Oy, 2014b)

The focus of interest in Borealis concerning engagement has evolved throughout the years. In the 1980’s the focus was on being content at the workplace, but as early as 1990’s the focus evolved into commitment and whether the employees planned to stay within the company. Yet, after the change of the millennium being satisfied and committed wasn’t enough anymore and the focus of interest changed towards motivation and performance. Today the interest has evolved even further with the inclusion of wellbeing in addition to motivation and performance. The evolution in the focus of interest showed also in the People Survey. In 2010 and 2012 the engagement section of the People Survey consisted of seven questions, and in 2014 the inclusion of sustainable engagement into the survey added five more questions to the list. From the current 12 questions, six are intended to evaluate engagement, three enablement and three the level of energy. (Borealis Polymers Oy, 2014b)

Table 5 People Survey questions concerning Sustainable Engagement

Category	Question
Engagement “Attachment to the company and willingness to give discretionary effort”	I believe strongly in the goals and objectives of Borealis.
	I understand how my team contributes to the success of Borealis.
	I would recommend Borealis as a good place to work.
	I am proud to be associated with Borealis.
	I am willing to work beyond what is required of me in my job to help Borealis succeed.
	At the present time, I am seriously considering leaving Borealis.
Enablement “A local work environment that supports productivity and performance.”	There are no substantial obstacles at work to doing my best.
	I have to work tools and resources I need to perform well.
	My team is able to meet our challenges effectively.
Energy “Individual physical, interpersonal and emotional well-being at work.”	I am able to sustain the level of energy I need throughout the work day.
	My work gives me a sense of personal accomplishment.
	The people I work with usually gets along well together.

(Borealis Polymers Oy, 2014b)

3.5.2 The interviews

The second stage of data collection is done with the aim of gaining an understanding of the employees of Borealis, and in particular the employees of the participating departments of Borealis, of the meanings they give to employee engagement and their thoughts about the actions done to support its development. Furthermore, the aim is to understand the effects it has on their work and how it is done. To gain this data, I have chosen to do thematic interviews in the participating departments. According to Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000), thematic interview is a semi-structured interview type, where there is a mutual element in

the interviews, but they aren't necessarily identical between one-another. They further posit, that a thematic interview builds up around central themes of the research, and is closer to an unstructured than structured interview type. Moreover, the usage of thematic interviews allows for taking into central the focus how people interpret things and that these interpretations are formed in correspondence with the researcher which works well also with constructionism and interpretivism that were selected as the philosophical starting points for this study. (ibid.)

The interviews concerning this study were conducted in February 2016. The employees of the participating departments received knowledge about this thesis through an e-mail sent to the all employees of the departments. The email included general knowledge of the thesis so they could make an informed decision about participating in this study. The participation was voluntary and 11 people informed me their consent to participating in this study. All-in-all, the goal was to have rich and ample amount of data, which is not too excessive in terms of doing the analysis in qualitative research methods (Silverman, 2010). As Materials Handling is the largest single department participating in this study, the goal was to have three to five participants from there, and then have the remaining participants from different departments of Administration. The aim was also to have participants from both employee groups of white and blue collars employees to see whether there are indications of a difference in the results of the interviews in these two employee groups. Both of these goals were achieved. All participating departments were represented, and the participants themselves represented both sexes and different ages. To protect the anonymity of the interviewees in the following chapters the extracts of the interviews are coded accordingly.

Table 6 The interview extract codes

The # of the interview	Extract code	The # of the interview	Extract code
1	A1	7	A7
2	A2	8	A8
3	A3	9	A9
4	A4	10	A10
5	A5	11	A11
6	A6		

The interviews were conducted in the meeting rooms at the main building of Borealis or in the premises of Materials Handling in a location where we could discuss uninterrupted. This was done with the intention to ensuring an atmosphere which is as relaxing, and builds a feeling of trust to gain rich, open and honest answers in the interviews. In the beginning of each interview a brief description about the research was given. Additionally, a non-disclosure agreement in which I agree to protect the interviewees anonymity according to the ethical standards of doing an academic study, was signed given to the interviewee, to further build an atmosphere of trust.

The interviews followed loosely the predesigned thematic plan, see Figure 6. For each interview ample amount of time was reserved so that there is no time pressure to get things done hasty. The length of a single interviews varied between 57 minutes to 2 hours and 39 minutes. The total length of the interviews was 19 hours, 0 minutes and 28 seconds of recordings. With each participant, I also requested for a permission to do an additional, confirmatory round of interviews, in case something that was of particular interest emerged from the data after the interview was over, and the answers was somehow lacking in a way that it seems that something was left unsaid. All participants agreed to the second round, however the first rounds were so rich in data, that the additional round was not needed. Furthermore, the interviewees were asked for a permission to record the interview. As Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) point out, that other forms of doing field notes, such as writing notes during or after the interview, either interfere the process of doing the interview or misses details, that can be accessed if the interview is recorded.



Figure 6 The thematic interview plan

The decision of ending the data collection through interviews are based in the number of willing participants of each department but also by the reaching of saturation. Saturation means reaching the point of the study where the interviewee's responses start to repeat themselves and there is no further promise of achieving additional information concerning the subject matter (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009; Hirsjärvi et al., 1997). As said, the first round of interviews gave a very rich data for this research. The same themes rose during the interviews, so the decision was made that the first round of interviews was enough and that there is no need for additional interviews and that saturation was achieved.

3.6 Methods of data analysis

The purpose of the data analysis is to gain understanding of how employee engagement has been built in Borealis during the past six years, but also to see what kind of perceptions the employees have towards these actions and what kind of reactions, if any can be seen the results of the work-related surveys. The first stage of analysis was done by looking through the naturally occurring documentary data that was gathered at Borealis. At first, I described

the campaigns and practices that have been done in Borealis in pursuit of employee engagement during the past six years. Second, I compared the results of the work-related surveys between the different years and different surveys to see what kind of progress on employee engagement has happened during the past six years. Thirdly, I compared the results of the surveys to the practices and campaigns to see whether there are indications of effects of these in employee engagement. So, the main result of the first stage of the analysis is a description of the practices and campaigns performed in Borealis in pursuit of employee engagement and a comparison of these two to the results of the work-related surveys to see what kind of story they tell about the development of employee engagement in Borealis.

The second stage of analysis was focused around working with the data gathered from the interviews. The interview material is first transcribed thoroughly from the recordings made during the interview. Transcribing the recorded interviews is very time consuming, but it is the first step of familiarising with the contents of the interviews (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). As Atkinson and Heritage (1984) in Silverman (1993) pointed out, doing transcripts is the first step of analysis, not just a technicality. They indicate, that by carefully and repeatedly listening through the recordings of the interview to write down what was said, it is possible to reveal something that was previously left unnoticed. The end result of the first part of the analysis of the interviews was the verbatim transcription of the interviews.

However, whilst conducting the transcription the ultimate themes of the interviews could be identified. These themes were focused around for instance the personal lives of the employees and the effect it had in the wellbeing of the interviewees and ultimately also how they felt about their work. Also, what was apparent was how the employees generally appreciated Borealis as an employer and the efforts invested in the employees given, that the majority of the interviewees also had some concern and improvement ideas that could take the company forward. Furthermore, one theme was consistent from interview to another, which was the need for growth and development. The need was consistently brought forward regardless of the person's career aspirations, employee group, age or gender. All of the interviewees expressed their desire to learn and develop. These themes were the first ones that could clearly be identified from the data, which I will introduce in depth in chapter 4.

After transcribing the interviews, I conducted a thematic analysis which is described as a technique for organizing the data with the goal of finding patterns or occurring themes (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). According to Kovalainen and Eriksson (2008) this is done

through thematic coding of the transcribed texts of the interviews. They further explain, that coding means that the different elements within the texts, such as features, instances, issues and themes are given a specific code as a label. Furthermore, they posit, that the codes can be derived from theory, or they can be derived from more of an inductive-oriented way on the basis of interpretation of the empirical data itself. In this study, I will be using the latter coding strategy, as I am interested in the themes that can be revealed and extracted from the data. Furthermore, I categorised the findings of the data. Categorising is done with the purpose of making it possible to compare and interpret, and to bring forward the elements that are the most important in the data (Hirsjärvi & Hurme, 1997).

The thematic codes of the material were then categorised and subcategorised and organized them into groups or themes, with similar features in them. I used the work done by Demerouti et al. (2001), Bakker and Demerouti (2007) and Hakanen and Roodt (2010) on the job demands-resources model (JD-R) during this process as the thematic analysis of the interviews as it was apparent that the themes from the interviews naturally could be categorised according their work. As a result, I came up with a synthesis of the results, that can be seen in Table 7. It consists a full list of these main themes and categories that follow the understanding I gained through conducting the literature review combined with the themes from the interviews. In short, the main themes included job demands that are divided into environmental stressors and emotional demands, job resources that consisted of resources that are related to either work or the organization as a whole, and personal resources, that were divided into professional capabilities and personal lives. These main themes can also be seen as the antecedents of employee engagement but also to some extent as the outcomes of the efforts to enhance employee engagement. Furthermore, the main themes included the views on the development actions of employee engagement conducted in Borealis divided into regular practices and special campaigns.

Table 7 Synthesis of categorizing of the data

Main themes	Categories	Themes from the interviews
Job demands (*)	Environmental stressors (*) Emotional demands (*)	Time pressures and workload, stress, limited resources in the organization, bureaucracy, rules and limitations from the headquarters, organization related challenges, IT and technical challenges Conflicts, uncertainty, lack of skills or knowledge, difficulty to concentrate, fatigue or sleeping problems, mismatch of goals and values, lack of support and development
Job resources (*)	Work related resources (*) Organization related resources (*)	Career and prospects, learning and development, role clarity, role development and changing of tasks, authority, challenges and interesting tasks, Cooperation and support, communication and feedback, relationships External and internal motivation, benefits Respect Flexibility
Personal resources (*)	Professional capabilities (*) Personal lives (*)	Attitudes towards work and life, resilience and optimism, dedication and absorption, self-efficacy and self-esteem Work and family life balance, positive work-home interaction, hobbies and free time, friends, healthy way of living, wellbeing
Views on development actions	Regular practices Special campaigns and projects	Focus on well-being, working environment Challenges in implementation
Outcomes (*)	Performance (*) Job satisfaction (*) Commitment and loyalty (*) Organizational citizenship behaviour (*)	Borealis as a goal employer Working culture

*Originates from the work of Demerouti et al. (2001), Bakker and Demerouti (2007) and Hakanen and Roodt (2010) on the job demands-resources model (JD-R)

3.7 Evaluation of the study

As there are several problems in using the evaluation criteria of quantitative research traditions for any qualitative research's, other criteria's have emerged. As suggested by Lincoln and Cuba (1985) in Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) trustworthiness would be a

good substitute for validity and reliability in constructivist research. Trustworthiness, in their view consisted of four elements: dependability, transferability, credibility and confirmability. *The dependability* aspect includes a logical research process, traceable and documented. Dependability also includes providing this information to the reader of the research as well. *Transferability* refers to the responsibility of the researcher to establish a connection between the results and the previous research by showing some degree of similarity. *The credibility* aspect refers to the researcher's familiarity of the topic and the sufficiency of the data to the conclusions made from them, but also, that there are strong logical links between the data and the themes that are found from the data. Also, credibility refers to replicability of the research, in a way, that on the basis of the materials other researcher would come relatively close to the same conclusions or agree the claims made by the researcher. *Conformability* refers to the data and the interpretations made from it. It stresses clearness of presenting the findings to the reader in ways that is understandable and logical. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008)

In this study, I aimed to follow a well-documented and logical research process fitting for a qualitative research and provided my findings in these pages for the reader. I have attempted to follow the basic principles of academic research whilst conducting this research and whilst doing the interviews by both ensuring the anonymity of the interviewees, but also through using coherent codes for the interviewees in the extracts of those interviews, to increase the conformability and credibility of the findings. I familiarised myself with the topic from different viewpoints during this process, both from the academic angle but also through the vast amount of naturally occurring documentary materials that could be identified from the case company Borealis and through the interviews that I conducted. The interview frame was used to improve the quality and results of the interviews, as also suggested by Hirsjärvi and Hurme (1997). High quality research is more to do with quality of the data, that can be gathered through choosing the right informants for the interviews and also the way the interviews are conducted (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). In this research, I chose to concentrate on two department groups which represent two employee groups, and this brings an interesting angle to this study, and improves the quality of the research as well. Furthermore, I pursued to create an atmosphere of trust to gain rich data from the interviews. Hirsjärvi & Hurme (2000) also state, that consistency and careful execution of the transcriptions is a way to improve the quality of the study. Improving the understanding of the case is improved with multiple data collecting methods, and the different methods used

in data analysis as well. Before conducting the data gathering I already knew that the naturally occurring documentary material available from Borealis would be abundant. For this reason, I paid special attention to means of gathering ample amount of information through the interviews. The process aimed to follow academic guidelines and considering ethical aspects in all the steps taken. Reflexivity, and being aware of the unconscious assumptions was one of the key elements whilst doing so. The decisions during the research process made were consciously made and they were evaluated afterwards. Thus, this study and the report was conducted with the aim to fulfil the requirements of a well conducted academic research.

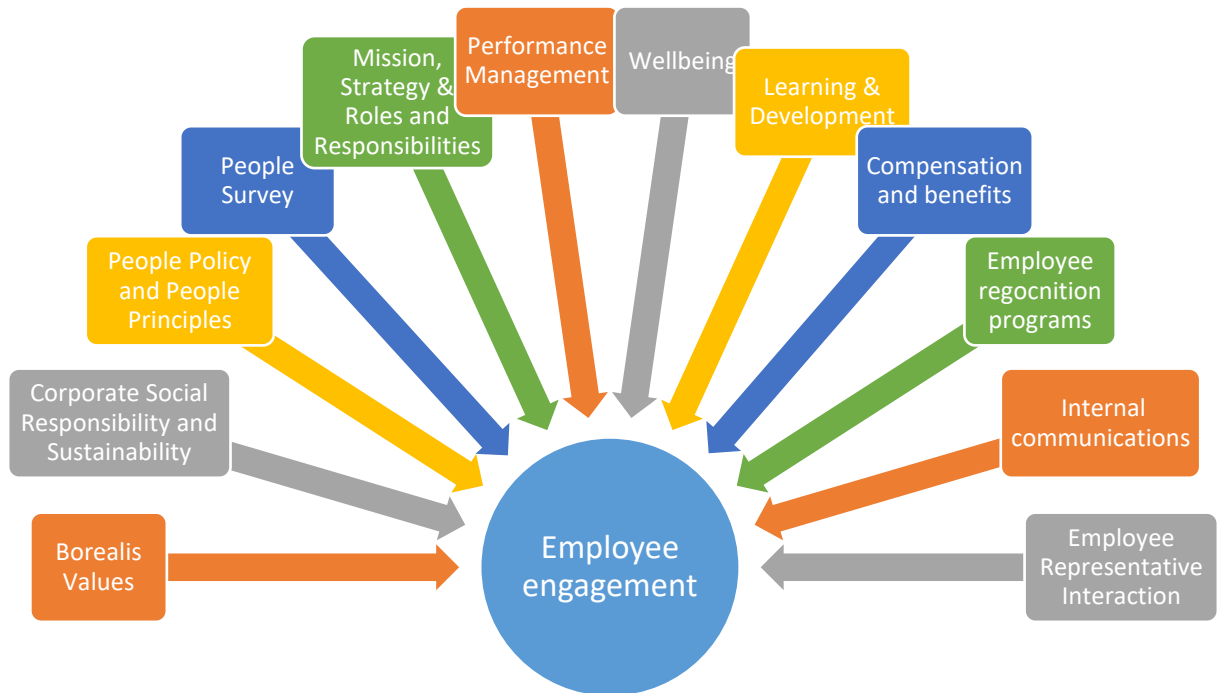
4 Findings

To answer the research questions and the objectives of this study the findings are presented in the following chapter. Firstly, to answer the research question 1 in this research of how employee engagement has been developed in Borealis during the past six years the findings originating from the naturally occurring documentary data are presented first. The materials that were used to understand the development actions in Borealis were linked with the regular practices in Borealis, such as the Work Place Surveys and the People Surveys, information that can be found in the company website concerning for instance the values of Borealis and the training materials concerning employee engagement. Furthermore, the documentary materials consisted yearly employee reports from years 2010 to 2015, introduction materials about Borealis and internal instructions from Borealis group. In addition to the regular practices in Borealis, the special campaigns such as the Winning through Excellence -program and the Wellbeing concept can be seen as affecting in employee engagement, thus the results concerning the findings of these campaigns are presented as well. The material concerning the special campaigns consisted of introduction and internal promotion materials and other presentation packages. The findings concerning the second research questions concerning the employee's perceptions of employee engagement are addressed in the later chapters. Without further ado, the results on how employee engagement has been developed in Borealis during the six-years are presented.

4.1 Developing employee engagement in Borealis

Borealis has chosen an active approach to developing employee engagement. They pursue to create a working environment in which the full potential of their employees is harnessed through employee engagement and meaningfulness (Borealis AG, 2015b). To evaluate the level of employee engagement People Survey has been conducted in every other year (Borealis Polymers Oy, 2014b). The Work Place Surveys has been conducted by the occupational health care in all departments in every five years to evaluate the level of employee health and the working environment within the departments (Borealis Polymers Oy, 2015b). This indicates that there is an understanding in Borealis that engaged employees bring value to the company but also for the employees themselves.

Employee engagement in Borealis is seen as “unlocking people’s potential at work” whilst at the same time delivering meaningful benefits for the individual, organization and society. Borealis has actively used various interrelated methods to create an environment where employee engagement can flourish. These methods are a combination of processes, activities and special campaigns, as can be seen in Figure 7. (Borealis AG, 2015b)



(Borealis AG, 2015b)

Figure 7 Development of employee engagement in Borealis

The basis for the development of employee engagement can be seen stemming from the four values that have been identified in Borealis. The values are used as a guide in business decisions and as drivers in all operations within the company. The values are comprised of “responsible”, “respect”, “exceed” and “nimblenessTM”. Responsible stands for being leaders in HSE (=Health, safety and environment), acting as good neighbours in all locations where they operate and to operating according to high ethical standards. Respect refers to a one-company mind-set that builds on diversity, involving people and straightforward communications, working together in a way that helps each other to develop. Exceed stands for promoting the success of the company’s owners and customer’s success through commitment and innovation and to deliver what is promised and exceed the expectations. The companies trademarked value NimblenessTM is the combination of words “nimble” and

“simplicity” and refers to being fit, fast and flexible, to creating and capturing opportunities and seeking smart and simple solutions. (Borealis AG, 2016a)

The people strategy of Borealis is articulated through the People policy which defines the basic principles of the relationship between Borealis as an employer and its employees (see Table 8). The principles are used to define the commitments and expectations from both sides. (Borealis AG, 2015b)

Table 8 People policy and people principles in Borealis

	Borealis commits to provide ...	This means ...	Therefore every employee will ...
Corporate Culture	1. A safe, healthy and professional workplace with room for diversity	A commitment to our health and safety standards, ethics and quality policies, in our international environment where diversity of thinking is appreciated	Promote and practice a zero mindset in HSE, act according to the ethics and quality policies and show respect for different viewpoints
	2. Active co-operation with employees and employee representatives	Providing opportunities for a regular open discussion between management and employees	Commit to a constructive and straight-forward dialogue with the aim to avoid unnecessary conflict
Recruitment and Talent Management	3. An employment relationship based on business and individual needs and performance	We still value long term relationships but we cannot promise job security. We can help people achieve employability by providing the opportunity to develop skills and experience while at Borealis	Ensure that they have an up-to-date portfolio of competencies at any time to achieve internal and external marketability
	4. An opportunity to contribute in a meaningful way to the success of our business	Supporting elimination of low value work where possible, ensuring all jobs have a link to Group targets, encouraging employees to find and act on new ways to add value for Borealis	Look for ways to continuously improve ways of working, both on an individual basis and together by sharing knowledge
Performance Management	5. Clear goals, measures and performance expectations	Agreeing clear performance targets within clearly defined measures, while providing support for a balanced lifestyle	Set challenging and achievable goals for oneself and the team
	6. Timely, honest and direct feedback on performance and career/job prospects	At least an annual review of performance and career/job prospects and follow up with necessary developments or re-deployment measures	Prepare for their performance review, ask for and give feedback and propose individual development steps
Learning and Development	7. An opportunity to develop knowledge and skills relevant to the business	Support for training to do current job and meet Borealis' future needs, defining short and long term competencies required and providing open access to internal job posting opportunities	Take responsibility for their own competence development, necessary to do the job, now and in the future

	8. Support for employee self-reliance	We will provide tools/information to welcome employees to Borealis and to manage their own careers and personal development	Use the opportunities provided to enhance personal growth and development
Compensation and Benefits	9. Competitive base pay benefits	Providing competitive job rates and suitable pensions and benefits	Add value to the business by focusing on increased contribution
	10. Rewards linked to individual/ team contribution and Group results	Using our salary systems, our Borealis incentive plan and non-monetary recognition to reward results	Deliver results to the best of their ability, helping and developing each other, concluding in results based pay

(Borealis AG, 2015b)

People development

The People Development Community (PDC) is responsible for all training and development activities and processes in Borealis. The community has several people development processes through which it carries out these duties. The first of these is the MyPDS which is the tool used for development discussions and a place to manage all Individual Development Plans and Performance Development Plans. Additionally, these processes include also the Expert and Leadership Talent Management and programmes and competence management through the courses provided by the Borealis Business Academy (BBA). Additionally, the People Development Community finds development solutions needed to fulfil any special needs that originate from management decisions and special projects. This means that the community constantly analyses the training needs in the organization, design suitable training and team development activities, provide external training when needed and takes care of the administration of the trainings and competence management. (Borealis AG, 2015c)

The Wellbeing concept

Borealis has a wellbeing concept that sets common company standards to four key areas of employee wellbeing: health, job engagement, competence and work and private life balance (See in more detail in Appendix 1.) The aim of the concept is to build on existing practices by sharing and further developing best methods and new ideas to promote well-being. According to the concept, wellbeing needs to be a constant issue and thus be managed proactively. Wellbeing is important to Borealis because of the win-win effects of it: it is important to each employee but it also has a positive impact of company performance. The benefits of wellbeing for the employee are a healthy lifestyle, motivation and engagement, competence development and balance of private and professional life. The benefits for

Borealis are engaged and healthier employees, better business results, customizable approach and sustainability. (Borealis Polymers Oy, 2015d) On my personal experience, the concept originated strongly from the ways that wellbeing work has been done in Porvoo and Scandinavia in general, where wellbeing is especially seen as an important part of working life.

The definition of well-being in Borealis is:

“At Borealis, we consider Wellbeing important and actively support the healthy lifestyle aimed at physical, mental and social Well-being. This includes engagement in meaningful work and the opportunity to learn and further develop competencies.” (Borealis Polymers Oy, 2015d)

The concept includes two dimensions that impact wellbeing, called focus at work and focus beyond work. Focus at work includes values and culture, work itself and the community in which it is performed, leadership and competences. Focus beyond work includes life situations which are affected by personal and family issues and the local community and society at large. (ibid.)

The commitments Borealis has made through the concept of wellbeing are four-fold. The commitments in ¹⁾ health include ensuring safe and healthy working environment with right tools and adequate training for the job and providing opportunities and information for managing their own physical and mental health. The commitments related to ²⁾ job engagement include making sure that employees are engaged in meaningful and challenging work whilst being recognised and rewarded for the contributions they make and have the opportunity for personal growth according to their career perspectives. Also, Borealis commits to creating an environment of open communication and giving and receiving feedback through for instance the People Survey. The commitments on ³⁾ competences refer to the combination of knowledge, skills, experience and behaviour. These commitments comprise of recognising the competencies employees have within Borealis, but also promoting the sharing of the competencies so that others can learn as well. Also, Borealis takes an active approach in ensuring that all employees have the opportunity for growth and expanding their competencies in Borealis, and effectively manage the transfer of competencies between employees across the organization. The commitments on ⁴⁾ work and private life balance include ensuring an open, fair and respectful working culture that are based on the Borealis values. Also, the commitment states, that the management and the

employees are committed to finding an appropriate balance between work and private life, and that Borealis is open to finding solutions on flexible working time arrangements that benefit both the employee and the company. (ibid.)

The Case for Change and Winning through Excellence

In 2010 the “Case for Change” of Borealis was identified because of the constant pressures towards Borealis from the operating environment such as the growing amount of polyolefin capacity in the market. The change initiative consisted of four reasons for change including the ¹⁾ level of profitability compared to the ²⁾ level of costs and investments which caused risks to losing the good achievements reached so far but also to the very existence of the company. Furthermore, the ³⁾ development of the core capabilities and to ⁴⁾ strive towards excellence in all operations to achieve the best position to ensure growth of the company. “Case for Change” formed a basis for the Winning through Excellence –program (WtE) which was launched in 2011 to support Borealis’s growth strategy. The aim for the program was to ensure that Borealis would constantly develop in all of its actions and operate efficiently even in times of downturns (Borealis Polymers Oy, 2013b).

After the initial launch, WtE has had several subprograms to achieve the strategy goals. These subprograms include programs such as Operational Excellence (OPEX), Commercial Excellence (ComEx), Research and Development Excellence (R&DEx) and Supply Chain Excellence in addition to the excellence programs of the support functions. WtE –program has been running as a continuum of improvement projects for the past years and it is still on-going. (Borealis AG, 2016b)

Until 2013 the Winning through Excellence –program mainly consisted of subprograms that focused on factual changes on different operations within the company. In short, the program focused on what Borealis does. In 2013 the Behaviour Excellence –program was launched to support the Winning through Excellence –program by focusing on how people in Borealis operate. The behaviour excellence -program used the values of Borealis as a backbone and built up on the feedback from the employees to come up with a framework to guide people in their everyday functions in Borealis and thus achieve the strategic goals of the company. The program also built the behaviour guidelines for all Borealis employees called “Connect-Learn-Implement”. Connect emphasises the importance of active contribution in teams, involving others to build bridges, and being ambassadors for respect and trust. Learn builds on continuous learning from both mistakes and successes, emphasizes on creating insights

across the boundaries of Borealis, and giving and seeking for feedback. Implement means assessing opportunities and managing risks in order to get things done, but also the importance of commitment to decisions and following them through, and delivering on agreed priorities and goals. (Borealis Polymers Oy, 2013b)

4.1.1 Views on development

In addition to understanding how employee engagement has been developed, it is equally important to understand how do the employees perceive these actions. Thus, to answer the first sub question of this research concerning the employee's perceptions on the actions to support the development of employee engagement these matters were discussed during the interviews. These discussions were focused around both the work-related surveys, but also around the regular practices in Borealis and the special campaigns conducted during the past six years. What comes to the employee's perceptions on the surveys and the corrective actions basing on these surveys the general opinion was that they were highly appreciated and valued, yet there was also room for improvement. The employee's concerns about the survey processes were centred around the corrective actions and the follow up process of the actions. The general request was that they should be brought closer to the everyday work, and that in some occasions there would need to be a better follow up process. However, a general understanding was that the surveys and their development actions in addition to the campaign are important and that they take the working community forward. In the interviews the perceptions towards the ways Borealis pursues to develop employee engagement were centred around two themes; the appreciation towards the actions to promote wellbeing of the employees and the criticism towards the frequency and implementation of the campaigns and projects in Borealis.

The appreciation was expressed for instance in these extracts:

A1: "What else we have? Well for instance People Survey, every time we do it there comes good actions as a result that somehow takes this working community forward."

A10: "Those work health care, and supporting sports and wellbeing is working so well that you can't hope for more."

The criticism towards the special campaigns and also to the regular projects and actions was focused around the amount, the frequency and the implementation. The general perception was that as there is high amount of campaigns there isn't enough time to let them sink and

become alive in the everyday lives of the employees. This can be seen as confusion of understanding what is meant by the campaigns and by mixing them with one another. This shows for instance in these interview extracts:

- A1: *“There may be too much of them, of that we can surely all agree on. On occasion, everything gets a little blurred as there is Winning through Excellence, Connect-Learn-Implement and then they all are connected to each other, but on occasion they are quite mixed up.”*
- A10: *“There are so many that you are a bit out of it. I always read the mails but you don’t necessarily understand any of them. Because you are not involved in them.”*
- A6: *“We have noticed that they don’t really come to our department. We hear about them, and we sort of understand them, but they don’t show in our everyday work.”*
- A11: *“A lot is probably done and a lot happens but then again how the project is taken through the line and making sure that everyone knows them, the implementation isn’t working. Like we have all these things and there are things going on in the pipeline, but seeing things through, like for instance with this Behavioural Excellence, which in my opinion is really good ways of conduct and everything else, but still the time that it takes for it to travel through the entire organization, I think we are a little too hasty in that regard. That we aren’t given the opportunity to take it far enough that we sort of count on that if we put a stand on the table well then the project lives.”*
- A8: *“These People Surveys and other tools, development discussions and others, they need to become closer to the employees and everyone on board. It is a big challenge to supervisor and management work and also to the local management but they should become more concrete and concrete improvement actions. They have been difficult to find and identify and then the follow up and the actualization, that is where the real challenge has always been. [...] They are in general good tools and even though it is something we do every day this development of how we operate in every operations area these could be utilized even more. [...] We tend to forget between the years what is there, we should follow them up better.”*

4.1.2 How does it show?

To understand how the development actions during the past six years in Borealis show in work-related surveys the results of People Surveys and the Work Place Surveys were

analysed. However, even though there were interesting findings in the Work Place Surveys to be found, the results didn't really give anything relevant to the question to whether and how the development actions show in the surveys. Consequently, the Work Place Survey Results will be used in the following chapters on presenting the meanings the employees give to employee engagement, but not in this one. Nonetheless, the findings made through this analysis of the People Survey results indicated something about the subject. Furthermore, the interviewees also brought forward their perceptions on the topic. Thus, this chapter introduces the findings made on how does the development actions show.

The People Survey questions concerning being proud of Borealis and whether the employees would recommend Borealis as a good place to work can be seen as evaluating the outcomes of all the actions that have been done during the six-year period. The results show that the majority of employees from both departments are proud to be associated with Borealis and they would also recommend Borealis as a good place to work. The fluctuations between the years indicate a downturn in both departments in 2012, but a new rise in 2014. The findings made about the employee engagement development actions in Borealis don't give a definitive answer to this, but there are several possible explanations to this. One option is, that the general actions done in Borealis forms a basis for these actions and that the causes for these fluctuations are caused by actions closer to the employees that are responding to the surveys. Another option is, that the simultaneous downturn is affected by some activities that is causing discontent amongst the employees. For instance, the Winning through Excellence -program was launched in 2011 so it can be, that the program is still causing more needs for efforts amongst the employees and the results aren't yet visible which can show in the results. Furthermore, the change in the shift system in Materials Handling can also be seen as a cause for discontent. Even though the change was generally appreciated, the change was major and affected all teams within Materials Handling. It is possible, that the change also affects these results. Furthermore, the continued global economic downturn is still affecting the business in 2012, thus this can also have an effect on the general moods of the employees that also show in the survey results. Either way, the results clearly indicate that there was a downturn in being proud of Borealis and on recommending Borealis as a good place to work in 2012, but in 2014 a higher number employees again showed more positive responses.

Table 9 People Survey: Being proud of Borealis and recommending as a place of work

	2010		2012		2014	
%, favourable	MH	Admin	MH	Admin	MH	Admin
I am proud to be associated with Borealis	82	91	83	86	95	95
I would recommend Borealis as a good place to work	86	91	77	86	93	90,5

Being proud of Borealis was commented during the interviews also:

A1: “I often talk about Borealis at home and point out certain things that we do here. In a way, I am kind of proud of my own employer. And of course, I come here every morning and do my best. And in a way, I really like coming here. Sort of I don’t think that I just work here but I really am interested what happens to this company. And I never say bad things about the company but instead be more like we have this and that, and we have things so good and have bus transportations and well yeah. So, it kind of shows that you don’t just think about that you get your salary but you pursuit to carry your duties in a way that everybody else does as well.”

What comes to the overall level of employee engagement in Porvoo, in Materials Handling and Administration through the results of People Survey, there can’t be seen a mutual trend. The overall level in Porvoo has risen throughout the six-year period, from 76% to 82,2%. At the same time, the levels in Materials Handling had first dropped in 2012 from 85% to 76% to rise again to 90%. Conversely, in Administration the results had first risen from 85% to 92% to drop to 86% in 2014. This results indicates that there are some actions made closer to the individual employee that affect the results. As the difference between the departments is so significant the company wide actions or the global economy don’t answer the question on why the employees of employee engagement responded so negatively on the employee engagement levels in 2012 to answer again positively in 2014. Also, the company wide actions don’t give an answer to why the employees in Administration answered differently to their colleagues in Materials Handling with such a high number of positive answers in 2012 in Administration and why the level of engagement again dropped in 2014. These results indicate that the company wide actions form a basis for employee engagement but

the immediately affecting aspects to an individual employee impact strongly on the levels of employee engagement.

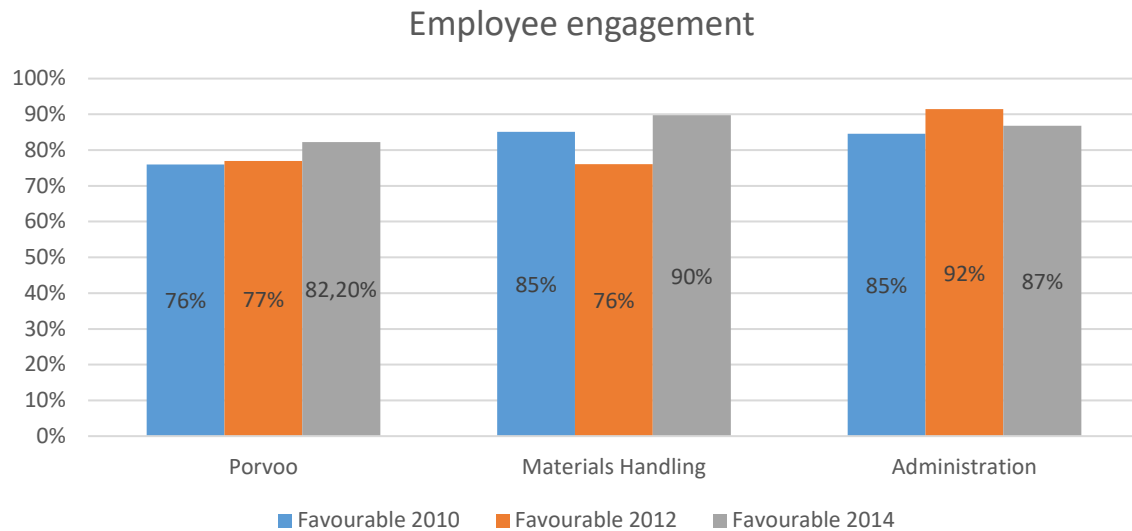


Chart 1 Employee engagement in Borealis (People Survey)

Overall, the perceptions of Borealis as an employer were commented in many ways, such as:

A10: “I still feel like that it is financially sound company that isn’t going anywhere from Porvoo and that in here there is the pursuit to do things as well as possible.”

A4: “What is well? As a starting point that the company is making a future, is making results, doesn’t lay out, keeps kind of... Appreciates long career, this type of company itself the starting point for doing the work. I think it is good. It is very rare.”

A1: “We have this sort of safe haven atmosphere, that we have had these savings programs and others, but they have ended and kind of like. Hopefully this isn’t just a calm before the storm, but it is quite a steady life here. No radical changes.”

These perceptions also support the findings made from the surveys, that in general the employees are content with Borealis as an employer.

4.2 Meanings to employee engagement

To answer the second research question concerning the meanings the employee of Borealis give to employee engagement and how does being engaged or disengaged affect their work and how it is done, the employees of the participating department, Materials Handling and Administration were invited to participate in interviews. During the interviews the topic was

approached from many angles, such as wellbeing and energy, motivation and commitment and how the employees perceived their current roles and tasks, among other things. Furthermore, the topics were discussed on different levels, such as from the angles of work and free time, work and organisation or individual and team. As a result, an understanding of different kind of meanings the employees gave to employee engagement was reached together with the perceptions the employees of how it affects their work and how it is done. Additionally, some of the findings from the People Surveys and Work Place surveys further supported or diverted from the findings made from the interviews. Thus, during the next chapters I will go through the main findings from both the work-related surveys in parallel with the interviews to see what kind of commonalities and diversions can be identified from the data. These findings were arranged into themes, that consisted of job demands, job resources and personal resources that can be understood as the antecedents to employee engagement. These themes and findings will be introduced in the following chapters.

4.2.1 Job resources

The two major themes concerning job resources were linked with work in one end and the organization as a whole in another. In many occasions these job resources were interrelated, such as when talking about the right amount of work within a role and the information and support given by colleagues that are needed to perform the tasks within a role. The next chapters introduce the findings of both work related and organization related job resources that could be identified in Borealis.

Work related job resources

The themes linked with work were focused around tasks and roles and the possibility to learn and develop in addition to the possibility to advance in one's career. There were many things that affected how the employees perceived their current tasks and roles. For instance, the variety of the tasks, how interesting and challenging the tasks were and how independently the employee could perform the tasks given to them affected on how content the employee perceived to be in their positions. Furthermore, during the interviews many interviewees evaluated the different aspects that had affected their career development thus far, how they had grown in their careers and what affected their future career plans. In addition to career development and changes of position, one theme in the interviews was the development within a position, with changes of tasks or inclusion of new challenges within the role.

Regardless of career advancement aspirations the need for challenges and the possibility to continuously learn and develop was highly appreciated.

As said above, different aspects affected how content on the role and work the person were in their current position. These aspects included for instance the role clarity, authority and the amount and quality of work that was required of them within a position. For instance, routines within the tasks were generally seen as boring but occasionally there were upside to them also, as described by one interviewee:

A11: *“And I, as a matter of fact, somehow some boring routines, I kind of enjoy doing them also because actually you get a something done and then somehow your brain can rest in that also when you only do your routines. And then you can again do something that really requires thinking.”*

The Work Place Survey indicated that the overall level of role clarity is at a good level in both Materials Handling (93,3%) and in Administration (95%) where most of the employees indicate either neutral or positive results in this regard. Also, the survey results indicate that the employees are generally pleased with the possibility to affect the work situation in both Materials Handling (90%) and Administration (88%). The role clarity as a job resource was brought forward also by some of the interviewees:

A1: *“Nowadays the job description is clearer. You know exactly what you are responsible for and what needs to be done and when. In [another role] it was kind of interesting but occasionally a bit unclear what is your responsibility and what is another person’s responsibility.”*

A6: *“The right amount of tasks and then you get some feedback and especially something positive if you have done something well. It always gives more energy and vigour in your doing but also that you have clear lines in what ways and what is expected of you.”*

The amount of work and support from working community was commented as:

A6: *“Work related wellbeing comes from the right amount of work, not too little because that is bad also because that you get nothing done. Then I get nothing done if I have too little because then you be like I can do this then and then and you just don’t do it. And also, if you have too much work that isn’t good either. Good amount of work and nice colleagues and also that sort of working environment that you can rely on*

getting the information you need and you get support from management and colleagues.”

The authority to work performance was also discussed during the interviews. However, no consensus about the topic could be seen. For instance, one interviewee stated that:

A9: *“About the independence question. You see, Borealis is in that way a very good company that you get a lot of authority, a lot more than you could imagine. And I usually test how far the line is; that will there be a wall and rarely there is.”*

However, for instance one interviewee saw the situation reversely:

A11: *“Now we have had this centrally governed EMO-organisation* that has caused a lot frames, decisions, tools, rules and instructions from the corporate level, clearly everything has been aligned. Whether it is [specific tasks], tools and what not. Somehow the [specific] role has become more and more of an implementing role, that you implement things. That you can’t really plan. That you have to use the same tools, certain [specific tasks] are done with the same process or paper or okay, with some amount of planning you can do timewise, but at what level you can carry it out? When everything comes as a given.” (*European Manufacturing Organization of Borealis)*

A key element in work related job resources was the need for challenges and meaningfulness of the job and within a role. The Work Place Survey results indicate that the employees are generally pleased with the possibility to affect the work situation in both Materials Handling (90%) and Administration (88%). The Work Place Survey results also indicate that around 95% of employees are content with the level of challenges and meaningfulness in their work. The clear need for this was also brought forward in the interviews. For instance, one interviewee stated:

A5: *“I think a job has to be meaningful that you do it. You do it for a while but if a job brings you nothing new, no challenges, nothing then it is quite a struggle.”*

When it comes to the sense of personal accomplishment the employees get from their jobs the People Survey results indicated that something had lowered the level in Materials Handling in 2012. In Administration, no such drops in the results were shown. This indicates that something that was closer to the everyday lives of employees in Materials Handling was the cause for lowered results in this area at that particular time.

The possibilities to learn and develop together with other aspects that were linked with the employee's careers were discussed from many angles during the interviews. According to the Work Place Survey high number of employees consider themselves quite competent in their work with 100% of Materials Handling and 95% of Administration indicating favourable results. Based on the survey, around 86% were also content on the possibility to professional development. However, the employees of Materials Handling were more content with the level of on the job training and guidance (91,4%) than the employees in Administration (64%). One interviewee explained the situation of on the job training as:

A8: *"We merely went through the 20 to 30 topics that were listed in the on the job training plan. They were superficially dealt without going too much into detail. Sort of went through the list."*

The Work Place Survey results also indicated that the employees of Administration weren't as content (50%) on the possibility for work rotation as their Materials Handling (93,1%) colleagues were. Work rotation was discussed also during the interviews. For instance, one interviewee commented work rotation opportunities with:

A1: *"Maybe one important thing is the development opportunities of employees. We have BorAT (=Borealis vocational examinations) and other things like that, so that the ones that are really interested, that want to learn more and develop themselves are supported in that. And also, that sort of work rotation, or that people would be allowed to change departments and that they are encouraged to do so, I feel that it is important."*

The Work Place Survey also indicated that there is high willingness to advance in one's career in both Materials Handling (88%) and Administration (95%). Even though the results of the Work Place Survey indicated that there is a very high willingness to advance, there was also quite a few in the interviews that indicated that they were content in the position they were in and had no ambitions to advance in their careers. For instance, one interviewee stated that:

A3: *"Where would you leave from your home? So no, I don't have any ambitions so to speak."*

Others saw their current position as a useful step on the way forward:

A1: *“my [current position] is in no way that sort of role that I would stay here permanently. I see it as a stepping stone where I learn a lot of useful things like [specific tasks] so of course it would be nice at some point move forward [within the department) in more challenging tasks.”*

A7: *“I would like to look at another role at some point, perhaps not quite yet. And on the other side I would like to take more responsibility. I don't know if that means as a, like, increasing my expertise. Or increasing my expertise, but I'm not sure of the managerial side either, you know, having more responsibility in that. I'm surprising myself that I am finding that I feel quite ambitious to move forward.”*

In some occasions the challenges could be increased within the role. For instance, one interviewee stated that:

A6: *“So yes currently, originally I made [previous tasks] but now that I have switched to [new tasks] so it is more challenging also. My [supervisor] has pursued towards making the role more challenging and more interesting. So, you don't need to do the same thing all the time. [...]. This is much more challenging and in a way more fun, that you know you don't have to do the same.”*

Many saw the importance of their own contributions as an important aspect of career advancements:

A4: *“Until this far also your own activity has been really important when it comes to career development and in my current role things are all right.”*

However, later on the interviewee stressed also the importance of the supervisor's role when it comes to supporting their subordinates in their development:

A4: *“The supervisor should know the level of knowhow of their subordinates. And then they could [arrange] the mutual support, kind of like master and the apprentice setting where the apprentice could get feelings of learning. [...] And that all could advance in their own pace, that you would be given this sort of steps that you could follow even though there are differences in the ability to adapt knowledge and learning styles.”*

Furthermore, the interviewee pondered on different opportunities of learning new things already prior you are actually able to make a move in your career:

A4: *"There really isn't something like, well yeah in development discussion they ask that what would you like to do but then it stays in that level. No-one kind of says that if you want to advance into this position then you need to do these things. No-one says that kind of thing there. And there isn't, I don't even know if there is anything like ready-made ladder which would then help you [advance]."*

Organisation related job resources

Organization related job resources were focused around the psychological and social working environment but also around the physical working environment in Borealis. The psychosocial working environment and the working culture included for instance a supportive working environment from peers and supervisors, feedback, sources of motivation, rewards and recognition, and Borealis's efforts concerning healthcare and well-being. During the next chapters I will introduce the different ways in which these organization related job resources were identified from the material.

The themes concerning the supportive work community were brought up in many ways during the interviews. It was discussed from the viewpoint of the role between the person and his or her supervisors, colleagues and the teams the person belonged to and from the viewpoint of the company culture. It was connected to the feedback the person received and the perceptions of fairness and justice. The support from the closest team and supervisor was perceived very important and it was used as a leverage to cope the demands of the work itself. For instance, good teams and also support from other parts of the organization were described as:

A1: *"It's a really good team. It is so clear, everyone has their areas that they take care of [description of the responsibilities]. It is very clear, nothing is uncertain that what belongs to whom and were all professional that know what to do. There is nothing unclear that you need to think that who does this belong to. And in other ways a good spirit. There is nothing like talking behind others backs or other things."*

A10: *"You are never left alone [with problems]."*

A11: *"...that you have any type of thing you ask within [your department] or outside you will get answers and people are eager to help. And it can be that if I need an hour with you and you don't have that hour you still understood that I have a problem. This sort of support from your department and the organization as a whole."*

A1: *“In here you always get help when you ask, and over the department borders we are cooperating with each other and helping and everyone is saying hello. There is a sort of good atmosphere everywhere.”*

This was also backed up by the findings from the Work Place Surveys and the People Survey. The majority of the employees in Materials Handling and Administration were content with the level of cooperation with colleagues and supervisors. The results of the People Survey indicated that 85,5% of Administration and 94% of Materials Handling employees perceived that their teams were able to meet the challenges set to them rather effectively. Also, according to the People Survey the majority of employees in Administration (92%) and in Materials Handling (81%) reported favourable results in understanding how their team contributes to the success of Borealis. As per to the perceptions on getting well along with colleagues, the People Survey results indicate that the employees of both Administration and Materials get along better than in general in Borealis Porvoo. However, according to the Work Place Survey, communication particularly in Materials Handling could be improved, as this would increase the predictability of work. Additionally, what the Work Place Survey results showed was that there is room for improvement in giving feedback. Giving feedback was also discussed during the interviews. Positive feedback was seen as a source of motivation but also, giving feedback and especially giving constructive feedback was seen as a challenge. All-in-all, the results from the interviews confirmed the findings from the surveys, that more feedback could be given:

A6: *“...that you receive feedback and especially something positive that you have done something well. It gives more energy and vigour in the doing.”*

A2: *“...that somebody gives me feedback that I have done something well. And that sort of external feedback carries you for quite a long time.”*

A1: *“I guess too little, like everyone else. More could be given. I try to give feedback especially to colleagues. At least to say thank you and give positive feedback. Maybe the constructive feedback is much harder. And well then, to supervisors you can give feedback to during development discussions compared to colleagues. If there would be something like constructive that would be really hard to say.”*

A7: *“Well I don’t give enough feedback and I don’t receive enough feedback. But ugly said this is a Finnish thing that you know your tasks and you know how they are done and so I’ll also know whether I have done them well or badly.”*

The physical working environment in Borealis is affected by different aspects relating to health and safety. The Work Place Survey indicated that the availability, usage, quality and the required information about the safety equipment was at a good level in Materials Handling and overall in Administration the employees consider the working environment to be safe. According to the People Survey, the overall level of tools and resources needed to perform well are rather high in Borealis, with Porvoo overall percent of 81% to above 90% in Materials Handling and Administration in 2014. However, the level of employees responding favourable results in substantial obstacles at work to doing work well is lower, with approximately three out of four being content about the situation.

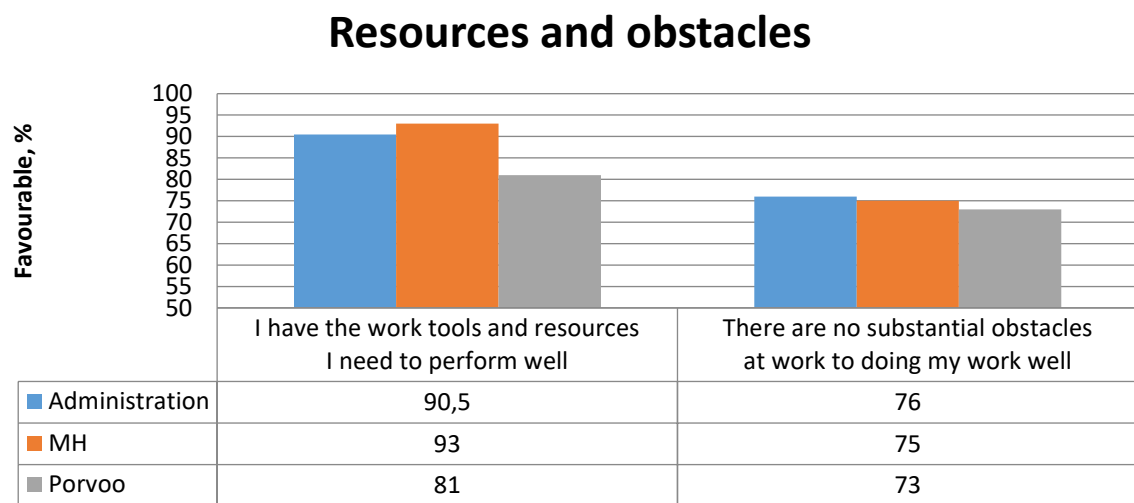


Chart 2 Resources and obstacles (People Survey 2014)

4.2.2 Personal Resources

Personal resources can be divided into two themes; professional capabilities and personal lives. The professional capabilities include for instance attitudes towards work, being resilient, dedicated and optimistic, in addition to realism based self-efficacy and self-esteem. The attitudes towards work can be understood as strong work morale and a drive to perform and give your best. Being resilient relates to tenacity and a mentality that supports problem solving but they can also be used as a form of answering the demands that a working life poses. Optimism, on the other hand, is linked with being open to challenges, having interest and pursuing an active approach towards different things in working lives, but also being ambitious. Self-efficacy and self-esteem have a breeding ground in realism, and results in professional pride and confidence. The personal resources stemming from personal lives are linked with positive work-home interaction and an overall balance between work and family

lives. Additionally, hobbies, friends, and a healthy way of living in general are a major source of wellbeing of a person.

Professional capabilities

Attitudes towards work and work morale have been evaluated through the People Survey. The results are favourable towards Borealis, as very high number of employees are willing to work beyond what is expected of them and help Borealis succeed. Even though the number of people that believe strongly in Borealis goals and objectives isn't as high as the ones indicating a very strong work morale, the results still indicate that a strong majority believes in the direction Borealis has chosen. The interviews also supported the findings from the surveys when it comes to work morale:

- A2: *"It is kind of your own that you want it yourself also. Because you want to get things forward and want to get things done."*
- A3: *"I do believe that everyone at least tries to do their best in the roles whatever they are."*
- A6: *"Dedication: it is something that you try to do your work with the best of your abilities and gets the best result. When a person is inside the work somehow."*

Dedications and optimism was commented in the interviews as:

- A1: *"Even though I am in [specific role] I still want to be a part of different things. Because I feel that it is motivating to do versatile assignments. [...] Occasionally there are these really efficient days when you feel like you have made a million important things. Maybe especially if you have done something a little harder or a bigger report or given a presentation or something that is out of the ordinary then you especially feel good that you performed well."*

Resilience and tenacity also relates to the ways a person copes with the demands of working life. This showed in the interviews in the different ways that related to the amount of work, and the different ways employees did the organizing and scheduling of the tasks. For example:

- A11: *"I notice also that if there is a lot tasks in the backlog undone then if there is something like that then I'm better of doing the important tasks that require precision before noon and leave for the afternoon those tasks that are like "leave your brains*

at the counter” just save something, [routine tasks] so that you just need to check up the basics. That sort of thing that you can do with half of your efforts.”

A9: *“I always do because I know that you never have time so I do even 5 minutes at the time so then the results suddenly pop up from there. [...] I am greatly saved by that fact that I always do two things at the same time so I always pull through. And even though I sometimes get critique out of it I still do so. And if you didn’t do anything else in for instance in long meetings you would survive it any way.”*

Furthermore, the interviewees talked about the how challenging they perceived their tasks to be and how they saw their own abilities to perform the tasks in relation to the challenge level of the task and the work role itself. Many also evaluated themselves in regards their self-esteem and self-efficacy:

A11: *“I think I have quite a realistic picture of myself that I say that when you look in the mirror you know where your strengths and development areas are, you know what you value in yourself but you also know the things what you should have done differently. I say I am quite realistic.”*

Personal lives

The personal lives were discussed in many ways during the interviews. It was brought up through good work and family life interaction and through highlighting the importance of friends and family, hobbies and healthy living habits in general. These all aspects were seen as a source of wellbeing, that ultimately affected also on the wellbeing at work. Additionally, the results of the People Survey show that the majority of personnel with over 80% in Administration and over 90% in Materials Handling show favourable results in sustaining the level of energy throughout the work day. During the interviews, the importance of good work and family life balance and support was discussed and commented for instance in these ways:

A10: *“You can do better at work; when you feel better mentally you have more energy to come to work. When you feel good at home, you feel good at work.”*

A1: *“I have a nice and supportive spouse at home which cheers and supports me well, so in that sense. And also, other family has always supported me in that sense. [...] “I feel that it is very important that work and family-life is in balance. I really don’t want to start hanging around the office late in the evening and then go straight home*

and lie on the sofa and do it again the next day. The hobbies in the free time and family and friends. And all those essential pieces in life, like sleep, they are really important that you can then give your best at work. I'd rather do 8 hours at full speed and your thoughts with you than 10 hours with no speed". [...] It is also nice to go home. In many times, you feel brisk after work and you don't feel like: phew, now I can't do anything and I will just go lying in the sofa. That you can go home feeling happy and cheery and go for instance in a gym. That in a way, the job doesn't wear you down."

When discussing about free time in general, the importance of hobbies and physical exercising in particular rose forward again and again during the interviews. Together with good social life, hobbies and sports were seen as a source to wellbeing:

A4: *"What increases your wellbeing? Well, physical wellbeing is of course increased with exercising and that sort of things and the sort of activities outside work. And of course, the mental side also. Hobbies, friends and at work that you have a good team, it is really important from the wellbeing at work point of view. And also, the feeling that you know what you do, that is a big part. And then, that you have things that you can still develop."*

Wellbeing and a good balance in life was seen as a foundation for all in general:

A2: *"It means basically everything, because without it you can't, can't... Meaning that if that thing isn't in order then it takes the foundation from so many other things also. So, in a way wellbeing is the foundation for all. Because in that way you can keep up your physical and mental capability to perform, and your motivation and your engagement. And then of course health and all things related to health it is really something that if it doesn't, if you have serious problems there then then it prevents also the functioning of other areas; sort of the self-actualisation in other areas of life."*

A11: *"Not having this sort of stress that stems from work. That you don't have any trouble sleeping or anything that you sleep all right. Everything is quite well in balance."*

4.2.3 Job demands

The main themes in job demands relate emotional demands or environmental stressors. The emotional demands included challenges in cooperation, lack of support or conflicts in

working relationships. Furthermore, role related challenges such as uncertainty of own skills, lack of support or possibilities to develop in one's career were causes for emotional job demands. Also, matters relating to wellbeing like fatigue or sleeping problems and challenges in the personal lives of employees can be a cause for emotional demands. The environmental stressors originate from the direct working environment of employees but also from the organization at large. They included limited organizational resources, workload and time related demands, but also demands relating to the size of the company including bureaucracy and rules and limitations. Additionally, environmental stressors include everyday challenges relating for instance to machines or equipment, IT-systems or information management.

Emotional demands

Cooperation and good working relationships forms the foundation for wellbeing at work. Whilst supportive working environment from peers and supervisors, feedback and recognition were sources of job resources, the lack of them can be seen as emotional demands that require sustained effort to cope with. Even though the People Survey, Work Place Survey results and also the interviews confirmed that in general there is good working environment and cooperation with peers and colleagues the interviews also showed that there also had existed or still existed challenges or disputes within the teams. The interviewees expressed these situations for instance like this:

A5: *“There is a rather poor spirit, so many in there are highly frustrated, there is whining and complaining, pretty much all the time. [...] At least part of the team used to pull together. Now it is more that every damn person takes care of their own jobs and nothing more.”*

A6: *“We have these kinds of internal disputes. [...] This person wasn't exactly capable of cooperation. And we are dependant of each other. [Description of specific tasks] And it was a challenging time for the team because one wheel didn't turn and it affected everything.”*

Sometimes the causes for emotional demands were caused by cooperation and poor communication or role ambiguity. Role ambiguity affected in the workplace either as lacking the ownership or taking responsibility of a task that would then burden another person with the task, or then with gaps as no-one would do the actual assignment. Either way these

situations caused delays and in worst cases bad feelings towards co-workers. These situations were described as:

A1: *“Well, one that type of challenge would be cooperation. It is caused by a lack of communication, as things are scheduled so that before a certain date the information should come”*

A2: *“Things easily are left in a state without responsibility, and in those situations, I do the work then.”*

A1: *“...things just float in the air because you didn’t know whether they belong to me or...”*

Reversely, as supportive working and managerial environment and respectful relationships and openness are seen as positive influencers of job engagement, the lack of them can have a negative effect on the level of engagement. In the interviews, the employees talked about the lack of open communication or lack of supervisor visibility in everyday working life, which caused for instance circulating rumours, uncertainty and lack of fluency of operations:

A5: *“[The negotiations] are done somewhere, somebody is saying somewhere, somebody has heard, that somebody has said about them. I know, as I went to talk with [a representative] that it has been going on, it has been for six months. I don’t know where we are going, nobody is saying anything, nothing is informed.”*

A4: *“Well it is just that, that openness, the kind of, lack of knowing how the things will change out there, and it just doesn’t... Management should be more visible out there. And in everyday life. The fact that I don’t see [the supervisor], I think I have seen twice, two times at the floor, and both times there has been a visitor along. So, they don’t come by themselves, just to visit.”*

A1: *“The person is present, but absent-minded. Not too well aware of [their] subordinate’s doings which is maybe one thing that affects the fluency.”*

One employee talked about lack of recognition in a case of a missed opportunity to give positive feedback:

A3: *“[The supervisor] came and asked what was going on, and I told [the supervisor] that some extra credit should be given for this, now that we are understaffed, and so much [challenging and time consuming] tasks were at hand this week, and in addition we*

still finished this project, and we showed [the supervisor] and the [the supervisor] looked and just left. So [the supervisor] didn't in any way comment on it, so I just thought, well fine then."

Emotional demands can also stem from the lack of development opportunities, and lack of support when it comes to the employees' career planning. During the interviews, some employees expressed their frustration towards the task they were in and how they felt about the support that they had received when talking about advancing into new positions. This was articulated for instance by:

A5: *"Well I don't know. In my opinion work you do needs to be meaningful. You do it for a while, but if there is anything new, no challenge, nothing then it becomes quite a struggle."*

A1: *"Hmm, well. It is that sort of thing that I feel that it depends on yourself. I have been supported quite a lot over the years, but maybe at the moment I feel, that not so much. It feels more like that there is constant haste with the supervisors and that sort of putting down fires. They don't have time and energy to think about their employee's development. Quite frankly."*

A4: *"Well no, they were more like, can you do that job, and that's that. There really hasn't been that sort of, well yeah okay they ask in development discussions that what you would like to do, but then it stays in that level. No one kind of says that if you want that then you should do this and this. No one is saying that over there. And there is no, I don't know if there is anything like, kind of steps, which would help the kind of [development in career]."*

As stated before, many interviewees saw that family, hobbies, healthy living habits and good balance in life in general were a good foundation for well-being in life. The overall wellbeing and the personal lives of the interviewees were discussed in many ways during the interviews. Sleeping and energy levels was one of the major themes that affected on the wellbeing of a person. Thus, sleeping problems or the lack of energy rose as a one cause for emotional demands that also affected negatively on the person's life. This was described in the interviews as:

A8: *“I have always arranged time for [hobbies]. What I have had in the free time and during work days it is the time taken away from sleeping. I am very bad at sleeping. The amount of sleep is rather limited due to stress and other affecting things also.”*

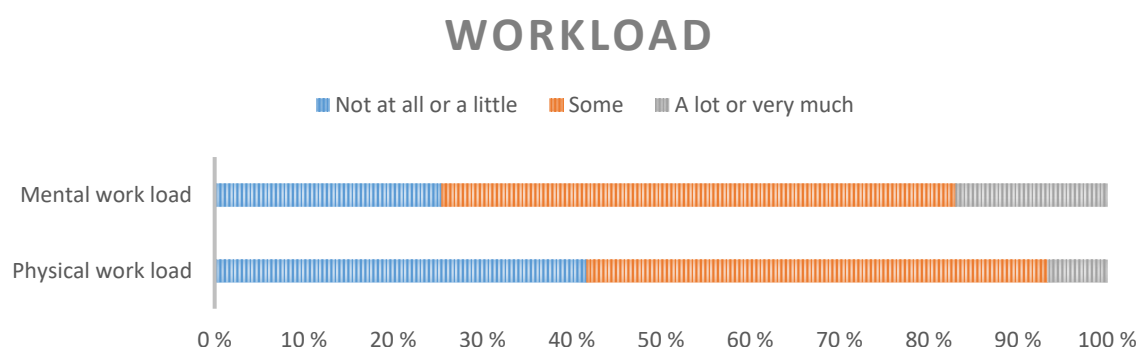
A7: *“It sort of varies, that I don’t really... Then when you have a lot of stress then at night you wake up and think about things and something else. Then it affects that you can’t give your best.”*

A10: *“Well it is kind of that if I haven’t had a badly slept night behind me that if you have had a good night sleep then it is nice to come to work”*

A5: *“I rarely feel like I have energy, so why you need to [have hobbies] that drains it to get energy. I just take a nap after I get out of work. Yesterday I took a 3-hour nap after supper and then woke up, watched 2 hours of telly and back to sleep again.”*

According to the Work Place Survey, the emotional demands showed that three people in Materials Handling felt that the state of their health had lowered and 10 people experienced problems sleeping. The mental workload was affected by the amount of work and the feelings of constant rush. The hurry and the constant overload of work was the major reason for mental workload in Materials Handling. According to the results of the Work Place Survey, 10% of employees in Materials Handling felt overly stressed and some 15% worried about work during free time.

Chart 3 Work Place Survey results: Workload in Materials Handling



The Work Place Surveys in 2010 and 2015 showed, that the mental work demands were the main source of job demands in Administration, with the amount work of as a main contributor in this area. In 2010 the mental demands were increased by the amount of work, the constant feeling of haste and the pressure of unfinished tasks. Some respondents took the work home also and worked overtime to respond the demands. In 2015 the situation with the

work load had changed a bit towards the positive direction. However, the amount of work was still demanding, and this caused elongated work days. In addition, for those travelling, it affected the inner schedules (biorhythm) of the employees resulting tiredness. In 2010, the survey showed that there is a need for work organization and prioritizing of tasks. The working environment had been affected by the changes in the staff in the departments but also by the lack of adequate on the job training for the new comers. Also, in some cases the role clarity wasn't as good as it should have been, and there wasn't enough time to go over the overall picture of the roles. In 2010 the stress indicators showed that 12 people felt stress occasionally, but that the situation is under control, four people experienced stress more often and that it might be strong more often, and that four-people experienced high levels of stress which required actions to improve the situation according to the occupational health care. In 2015 17.2% responded higher than normal results in stress levels. According to the Work Place Survey results, some 40% responded that they sometimes or often felt tired and almost 20% felt sometimes or often totally exhausted after a working day. Some 20% indicated that they sometimes of often felt overly stressed and over 40% sometimes or often worried about their work during free time. Even though the results indicated an improvement in the situation, the number of employees experiencing these types of mental demands are still high.

Workload

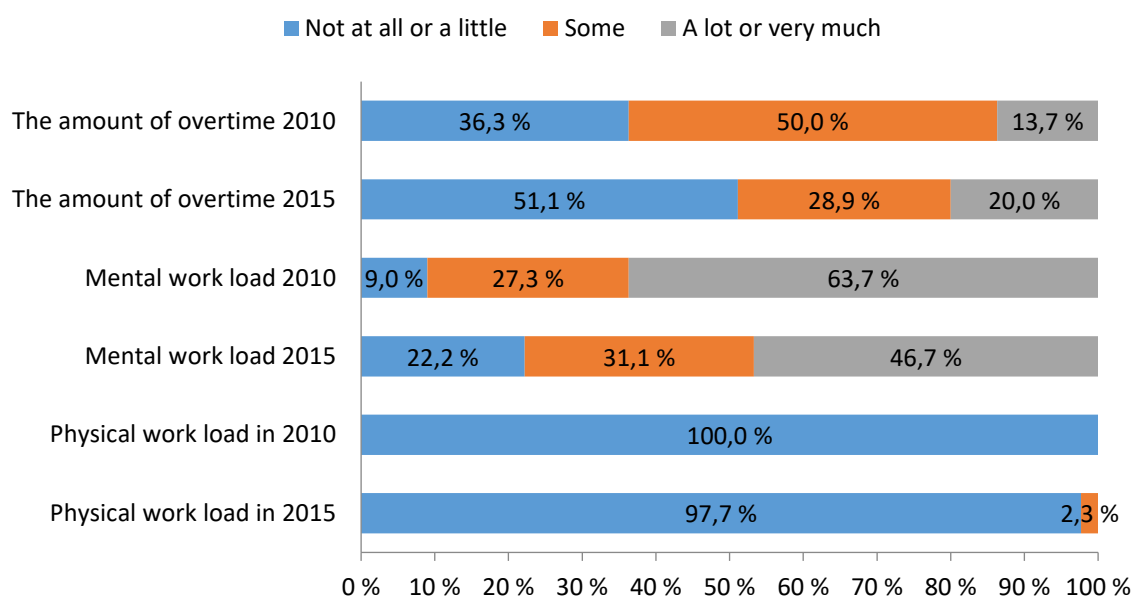


Chart 4 Work Place Survey results: Workload in Administration

Environmental stressors

Workload, uneven distribution of work, time pressures and having limited resources organization wise was a frequent concern amongst the interviewed employees. The results indicated that the amount of work had grown due to new requirements either externally or internally. These requirements were the mixture of campaigns and projects, increases in the production capacity or the diminishing of teams, among other things. As the workload seems to be getting bigger the time pressures have increased simultaneously and in this way these challenges seemed in many ways intertwined. The excess workload, time pressures and limited resources was described during the interviews as:

A11: *“the problem is that the situation hasn’t been resolved. If the situation is that there is only 1 person and you have full time at one point and [additional work and tasks] in another, then you got to know that you are putting down fires. But surely it will resolve itself at one point.”*

A1: *“The team has also diminished. Previously there was little more heads than now. [...] Especially some people are really very busy all the time.”*

A5: *“I feel like that there is hell of lot more work to do.”*

A8: *“There has been a decision to combine tasks and the tasks have become more or less in addition to the previous one. [...] Now it slowly reveals itself when I do those tasks. Thus, the challenges are quite tough; a big part of these tasks are something that are difficult to prepare in advance but it is more like gathering information, when you think about [the specific tasks] it is quite a vast entity. And quite a difficult package to understand and control.”*

The limited resources were also shown by the lack of back-up system:

A9: *“There are no backups. [...] that you should have a sort of back-up for things especially for those that are none the less have to do. But there isn’t. [Description of specific tasks and circumstances.] You can’t even keep up a system where you had someone as backup, because you don’t have time to train the other to those things that happen and because the other one has also the same kind, the monstrous amount of work.”*

Time pressures portrayed in many ways as well in the interviews. Many talked about the number of meetings, but also the inefficiency of the meetings. This caused feelings of

frustration as the time spent in meetings was time away from doing more productive work which in turn affected on the growing of the “to do –list”. For instance, one interviewee stated, that:

A6: *”Yeah, we have those kinds of weeks that they are kind of full. Mostly meetings, yeah, and afterwards those kinds of weeks you might get a feeling that did I really get anything done. Yes, I sat in the meetings but did we accomplish anything concrete there. And as those meetings, I have to say, aren’t always... The quality isn’t the highest in all of the meetings and especially in those cases afterwards you might feel that I could have spent this time doing something better.”*

A11: *“There are those weeks that it is all the time from 8 to 4 meetings and you have a half an hour lunchbreak and then you read emails from 4 to half past 4 then that isn’t nice. When you have weeks like that. Because then it goes overboard; the to do –list is too big. [...] If it is like I have to do 10 things at the same time; five I can do but not 10, so if it goes to that kind of situation then I don’t like the situation. Then I know that I can’t give my best.”*

Uneven distribution of work was also seen as a source for job demands. This was discussed in the interviews, for instance like:

A3: *“And you can’t do anything in advance. And then you need to do everything ready immediately. Let’s just say, that there isn’t a between alternative in this regard.”*

A1: *“There is definitely variation in that. There are days that afterwards you felt that now everything has been taken out of me and then again, there are days that you just felt that today I really didn’t do anything.”*

A4: *“The biggest challenges there are in the inconsistency. There are days, when there is a hell of a lot of work and others when there is none. And then the kind of level of stress it varies a lot.”*

A5: *“You don’t get any respect for it. Everyone just assumes that everything happens with a snap of the fingers. [The managers] just assumes, that it all happens in a simple way but really, when they would come and look for themselves how we run it on busy days it would give some perspective about the pace things really need to be done. Well ok, then there are quiet days when you don’t have to do anything, but it sorts of levels the ones when you are hell-of-a busy.”*

Many interviewees discussed the issues relating the size of the company from the point of view of everyday working life and the way that it affects the way that they work. The main themes were international relations, bureaucracy and rules that somehow prohibit the person and the role of Porvoo as a hub in an organization that is centrally managed from Austria. This showed for instance in these extracts from the interviews:

A11: *“The fact that the ways of working come from above so that is probably kind of, a certain type of hierarchical way of working that you take care of this or... Reporting has increased I think. These are negative aspects.”*

A7: *“But maybe we have a tendency to over document some things. So, we need to find things to maximize our work, this is completely management talk, but we need to basically maximize our efforts and kind of cut these silly tasks, that we have to do. It's plain and simple fact that if you have a well-organized work, a larger organization and you have a lot of rules, you get a lot of those small tasks and silly things that go on site.”*

A11: *“The thing that prohibits you is when you go into the group level, kind of over the country's borders, and then it takes time. So, you send something, you need the information, on Monday you send a paper, a specific request, so you send it right away, and then it takes a week and a half if it goes right to the top and they are travelling, so the thing doesn't go forward.”*

A3: *“Simplifying all those processes could be in order. We have this problem in Borealis, that in different locations we have these parties which affects so that approvals of different levels go to these different locations which slows us down. So, it could be that locally we could make some decisions instead of taking things to head office in Vienna. Where somebody then estimates that do they really need that many pens. That sort of crazy things.”*

International relations were generally seen as a positive aspect of working in a large corporation as Borealis. However, working in a large international corporation also caused some challenges in the working life. For instance, one interviewee stated that:

A6: *“Well yes, this has changed this whole picture; now that we have [more people] we have even more cultural differences, as we have noticed that they have their own way of doing things.”*

Another type of environmental stressor originates from the tools and systems that are used in the workplaces. These sources of challenges in the everyday working life were also described in the interviews. For instance, there was some amount of frustration towards the IT-systems and equipment that are used daily:

A3: *"Damned printers and other technical equipment. They once and for all just don't work. Our internet connection is just so bad. And yet, all our programs are online. It is utterly infuriating when you have to wait for every single thing. They would go so much faster, if the internet connection would be better. All, even SAP would be faster."*

A6: *"Our systems are quite complicated and they change all the time. [...] Even though there are these SAP-IT persons they can't really get the message through. They can't change the things and we just have to live with it. That you know that you have to put certain things to certain places but when you have to teach a new person to do something then it gets tricky. Of those, well I have been here quite a while so I know all the tricks and where I need to put things but then if you have to teach a new person then it's like; oh, in that field, oh why? Well because."*

A1: *"Of course, one of the challenges is the technical side with SAP that you need to do some complicated stuff. So, you sometimes need to use your brains but nothing too overwhelming has come up this far."*

An addition to the technical challenges is the management of information within the systems. As the information management is handled in many places with complex structures and limited access it produces double work and expansion of data. These challenges in information management were commented for instance as:

A7: *"We do a lot of what my colleague called market work. Which is basically filling documents, and keeping records and a lot of that it's also a double work because you can probably find that information somewhere else in another department."*

An overall concern about the IT-systems and equipment used in Borealis was expressed by several interviewees:

A8: *"There are many things that are good in Borealis, but as I've said many times that Borealis is in some matters and in information technology and in general things a little behind. So, that in many areas we should keep the pace."*

AI: *“Somehow I feel that we are to some extent a little hung up on somethings. [Safety culture as a first example] But maybe a lot of kind of old fashioned, I can’t think of any good example, but maybe all these for example cell phones and these kind of things, in those we are in kind of the stone age really. Maybe it’s got to do with the headquarters in Vienna. Just like social media and other things we are not in. So maybe in that sense were necessarily not the place where all the young engineers and business graduates are like; I want to work for Borealis. So maybe it’s also a kind of employee branding thing.”*

According to the Work Place Survey, the physical working environment in Materials Handling is affected by the fact that facilities and machineries are old, and this affects the overall operations in the department. High levels of dust in the warehouses and the places where the polyolefin plastics are handled affected also the working environment. In addition, the levels of dust, some respondents indicated concerns about the air due to exhausts of the forklifts and the trucks that are being loaded. Also, the yearly seasonal changes in Finland affected on the temperature in which the work is done affecting both very warm and cold conditions. Some respondents commented that the constant working on forklifts caused back pains due to tremor. Additionally, the long periods of having to work with looking back caused problems also. Some tasks also required difficult positions for elongated periods of time or heavy liftings.

The Work Place Surveys in 2010 and 2015 showed that the physical environment in Administration posed low job demands on the employees. In 2010 the physical strains were mainly focused around ergonomic conditions of working elongated periods in stagnated positions at desks which caused some shoulder and back pains. The survey showed that in some cases the offices and meeting rooms were either too cold or too warm, and there were issues concerning lighting and cleaning of the facilities. The quality of air conditioning had caused some issues, especially in meeting rooms with too much people. In 2015 the survey results indicated that the ergonomic conditions were in order, however it is still affected by sitting work, which causes different problems in the neck, back and blood circulation. The work place inspections showed that the majority had electrically adjustable working tables in use and that the chairs had good adjustability and were in good condition. Some of the offices were rather cramped and some had large windows, which caused disturbing reflections and rising of the temperature. Draft and cold is a problem in some offices during autumn and wintertime.

4.3 Summary

The purpose of this chapter is to report the findings made in Borealis in regards to the research objectives of this study. The objectives were centred around two themes. First of them wanted to shed light on what has been done in Borealis to develop employee engagement and how do the employees of Borealis think about these actions. An ample amount of data already existed in Borealis telling about the different ways employee engagement had been developed throughout the years. This naturally occurring data told a story of multiple ways in which the development practices have been done either through the regular practices or through special campaigns. The naturally occurring documentary data was gathered mainly to answer the question on how employee engagement has been developed in Borealis during the last six years. The second objective focused around the different meanings the employees of Borealis gave to employee engagement. The interviews were conducted to get a view of the perceptions of employees towards the development actions done by Borealis, but also to understand the different meanings the employees gave to employee engagement and how it affects the way the work is done. During the next paragraphs the summary of the findings is presented.

The findings made of the regular practices indicate that the basis for the development practices is stemmed from the Borealis values, and the main aspects are articulated to the employees through the People Policy and the People Principles. The principles define the meanings and expectations for instance for the people development and career management, the compensation and benefits and the company culture. On the other hand, the development activities are strengthened by the special campaigns, such as the Winning through Excellence, Behaviour Excellence and the Wellbeing Concept which defines the common company standard for wellbeing activities in four areas of health, job engagement, competence and work and private life. These results of these activities are regularly evaluated through the People Survey, focusing on the organizational well-being and through the Work Place Survey focusing on the occupational health on a more individual level. The results of the surveys are used to assess the level of employee engagement but also as a tool to find development actions to develop the situation further. The interviews indicate that in general the development actions are valued, however there was also criticism towards the actions. The criticism was mainly directed at the frequency and the implementation of the projects. The claim states that there are too much projects to be done that there isn't enough time to take it through the entire organisation in a way that it comes to live.

To answer the question to whether and how the development actions showed in the work-related surveys the results within the two department groups of Administration and Materials Handling were analysed since 2010. The results of the Work Place Survey, even though they were interesting, didn't add value to the answer. This led to a decision where the results of the Work Place Survey would be used in answering the second research question of this study. The People Survey results indicated that the employee engagement level is quite high and that there is an overall upward trend in the results of employee engagement in Borealis. However, the departmental results weren't in line with each other, meaning that in 2012 the level of employee engagement showed a downward dive in Materials Handling as at the same time the results in Administration showed an upwards dip. This indicates that the company wide actions affect to the results to only some extent and the rest is affected by decisions made closer to an individual employee.

To answer the second research question on the meaning the employees of Borealis gave to employee engagement, the findings were made by comparing the results of the interviews to the results of the work-related surveys. The findings were divided into job resources, personal resources and job demands that can be understood as the antecedents of employee engagement. The main findings concerning the job resources can be linked with the content of the job and role of an employee combined with the possibilities to learn and develop within the role and/or in a future role. The physical, psychosocial and social working environment could be identified as another important part of job resources, which mainly focused around supportive working environment and on the efforts invested on healthcare and wellbeing in Borealis.

The main findings made about the personal resources were linked with the employee's perceptions towards work, which in many cases was also affected by the personal lives of a person, but also by the job resources and job demands that a person experienced. The attitudes towards work was strongly characterised with strong work morale and a desire to give one's best. Some of the respondents expressed being more optimist, which in many cases was also linked with ambitions in their career while others expressed feelings of frustration when the career advances hadn't materialised as hoped. A balanced life-style, love and friendships combined with a healthy way of living in general could be identified as a major source of wellbeing adding up to the personal resources of a person.

The main findings in regards to job demands were linked with either emotional demands or environmental stressors. The main aspects in this regard were any challenges in the working relationships, challenges relating to the role a person was holding at the moment or was hoping to have in the future and/or matters relating to the overall wellbeing of a person. Furthermore, lack of resources or workload that is too large and/or the person experiences constant time pressures, these can be seen as aspects that might affect the employee engagement negatively. Additionally, the environmental stressors either from the direct working environment, like the tools used such as machines or IT-systems or from the organisation, like the bureaucracy can be understood as adding to job demands.

To evaluate the outcomes of the development actions and of employee engagement in Borealis, the findings made from the People Survey combined with the results from the interviews indicated that the overall level of employee engagement is quite high. Borealis seemed to be appreciated amongst the employees and many interviewees expressed being proud of Borealis. Borealis was perceived as financially sound and safe company, that pursues to enhance the wellbeing of its employees. Even though many expressed criticism towards the company and the decisions made within the company during the interviews, the overall level was on the positive side.

To evaluate the findings made and to compare them with the theory concerning employee engagement these aspects will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

5 Discussion

This section of the thesis aims to answer to the research questions of this study:

Q1. How has employee engagement been developed in Borealis during the past six years?

- a. How do the employees perceive the actions done to support its development?
- b. How does it show in work related surveys during the past six years?

Q2. What kind of meanings the employees of Borealis give to employee engagement and how does it affect their work and how the work is done?

The literature review of this study presented what has been done in the research field of employee engagement thus far. Basing on different elements from the literature review and the findings made during this study an integrated framework of developing employee engagement was created. It is drawn based on the job demands-resources model, but enhanced to include the multileveled idea of employee engagement instead of focusing

solely on work engagement. In addition, it has the development and evaluation dimension which addresses the company's role in regards to work engagement. It follows the findings made of the development actions done in Borealis to enhance employee engagement. Thus, it is an integrated conceptual framework with its roots in the practices of Borealis and in theory.

The framework addresses the first research question: *“How has employee engagement been developed in Borealis during the past six years?”* and its sub questions: *“How does it show in work-related surveys during the past six years?”* and *“How do the employees perceive the actions done to support its development?”* in the development and evaluation parts of it. The rest of the framework is directed towards the second questions: *“What kind of meanings the employees of Borealis give to employee engagement?”* The framework posits that employee engagement works in a mediating role between antecedents and the outcomes. The antecedents are divided into job resources, such as job characteristics, perceived organizational and supervisor support, rewards and recognition and procedural and distributive justice (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Hakanen & Roodt, 2010); and personal resources, such as self-efficacy and organizational based self-esteem, resilience, optimism and positive work-home interaction and personal lives (Sonnentag, 2003; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2008; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007; Hobfoll et al. 2003; Hakanen & Roodt, 2010). Job demands are divided into environmental stressors such as the working environment, time stressors and workload; and emotional demands such as role ambiguity, conflicts and pressures from customers. Job demands affect the level of employee engagement if the assigned work and performance requires great efforts. (Demerouti et al., 2001; Hakanen & Roodt, 2010; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) The outcomes include for instance performance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviour and loyalty towards the organization (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010; Saks, 2006; Saks & Gruman, 2014). Furthermore, the framework includes the organizational dimension to it. The organizational dimension suggests that a way to continuously develop employee engagement is evaluation that stretches from antecedents to the outcomes, and the development of those antecedents that promote employee engagement and the elimination of unnecessary antecedents that have a hindering effect on employee engagement.

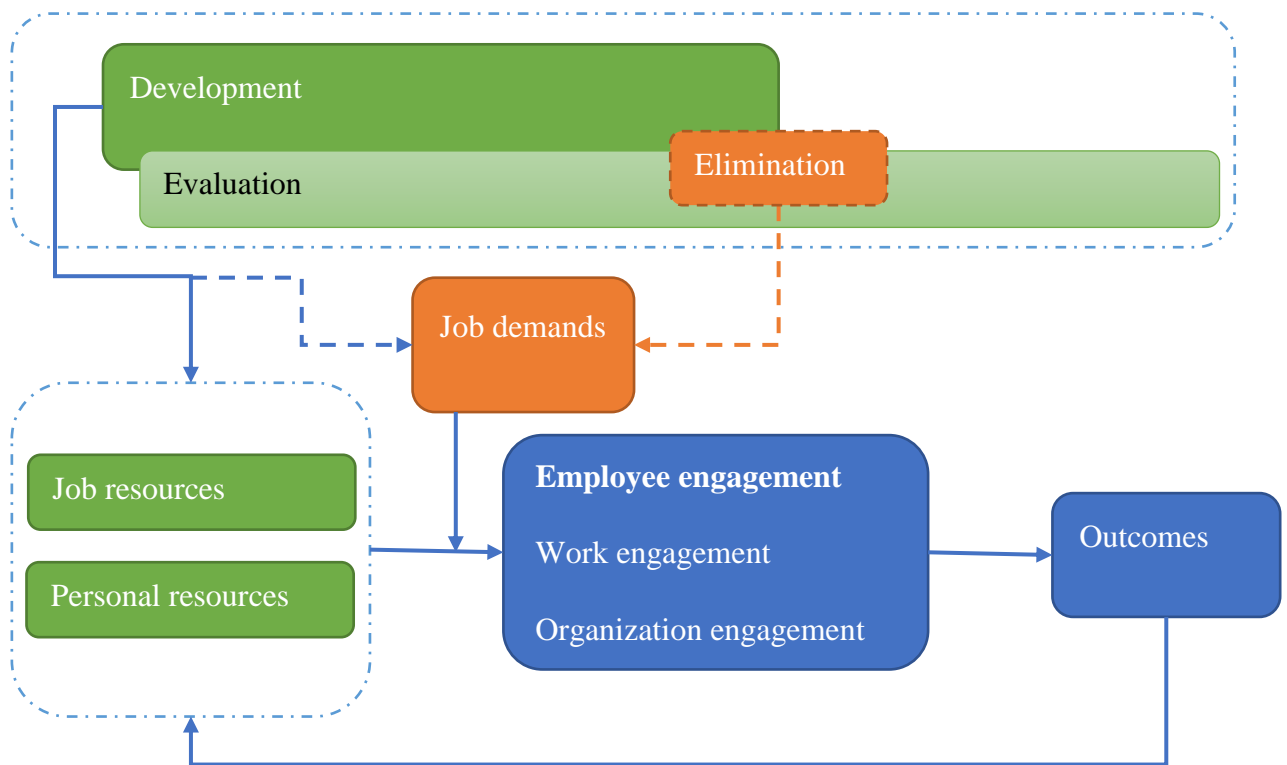


Figure 8 Framework of development of employee engagement in Borealis

Thus, the development of employee engagement comes from understanding employee engagements role as a mediator between the antecedents and the outcomes of it. All-in-all, employee engagement is a desired motivational state that is a combination of cognitive, emotional and behavioural components (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010; Saks, 2006; Saks & Gruman, 2014). The antecedents to employee engagement as they were identified from the findings of this study concerned the meanings the employees gave to employee engagement in the interviews. The meanings were the job demands divided into work and organisation related resources, personal resources that consists of professional capabilities and the personal lives and job demands divided into environmental stressors and emotional demands. The positive outcomes can be divided into personal-level and organisational-level outcomes. These outcomes, when it comes to this study can be evaluated solely through the results of the survey, i.e. the level of employee engagement and through the results from the interviews without evaluating the effect on the bottom line.

During the following chapters I will elaborate on the different ways employee engagement has been developed in Borealis and evaluate them side by side with the methods suggested in the literature review. I will also assess the feedback the employees gave on the methods used to enhance employee engagement. Furthermore, I will discuss about the work-related

surveys conducted in Borealis during the past six years and how employee engagement has shown in the work-related survey results. Furthermore, I will go through the different meanings the employee of Borealis expressed on employee engagement, its antecedents and the outcomes, essentially the ways the employees described on how employee engagement affects their work and how it is done.

5.1 The development of employee engagement

Developing employee engagement brings benefits both to the organisation and the individuals working in them (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010). In this study, the development of employee engagement was studied from two different angles; the “positive interventions” where employees are encouraged to reach their highest potential by building a working environment where all employees can thrive (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010). “Positive interventions” are directed at the entire workforce and meant for improving health and well-being, and ultimately employee engagement. These methods require sustainable and continuous efforts, to become effective (ibid). Developing employee engagement was also approached from the angle of performance management with employee engagement at the heart of it (Gruman & Saks, 2011).

Borealis has chosen an approach to employee engagement that indicates an understanding that there are multiple ways to develop employee engagement. They have a wide variety of regular practices, that are described in their people policy and principles that include for instance learning and development activities, compensations and benefits, talent and recruitment management on top of corporate culture commitments. Furthermore, the people policy and people principles articulate the commitments Borealis has made towards its employees but also what Borealis expects from its employees in turn. In every of the commitments there is a clear definition also for the employee that promotes the actualisation of the principles. It seems that performance management is done with the purpose that all employees are aware of the mission and strategy in addition to their roles and responsibilities.

The recruitment, performance and talent management described in the people principals can be seen both as individual and organizational based “positive interventions” that were suggested by Schaufeli and Salanova (2010) as methods for developing employee engagement. In Borealis these elements are understood, which can be seen for instance in the values of the organization, in the people principles through a commitment into health,

safety and ethics and through the “Wellbeing concept” that sets common standards for employee wellbeing. There seems to be a true desire to build up a corporate culture where employees are cared for.

The People principals of Borealis also include the steps of Engagement Management Model that according by Gruman and Saks (2011) promote the engagement of employees. The steps of the model include performance agreement, engagement facilitation and the performance and engagement appraisal and feedback. Through the engagement management process a working environment where employees have such resources that lead to the psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety and availability that are associated with high levels of employee engagement. (ibid.) However, the review of the psychological contract that was indicated as an important step of the Engagement Management Model to develop employee engagement couldn't clearly be identified from the findings made within Borealis.

The regular practices to develop employee engagement in Borealis also include the People Survey, that is used both as a tool to develop it and a mean to evaluate the level of it. The results of the interviews indicated that the work-related surveys were generally appreciated by the employees. Some of the interviewees stated that the surveys and the corrective actions that are done basing in the survey results takes the company forward. However, the employees also vocalised the need for improving the follow up of the survey processes, the need for bringing the improvement actions closer and relevant to everyday work. The general view amongst the employees as indicated in the interviews was that the way Borealis handles the wellbeing of the employees was at a good level.

The possibilities to training and development combined with career management possibilities was promoted by both development methods introduced in the literary review. In the method of “positive interventions”, it was approached from the viewpoint of the organisation for instance by promoting the importance of assessing and evaluating the employees in order to have the right people at the right positions. Assessing and evaluation was seen bringing benefits to the organisation with increased identification, motivation and commitment but also from the employees point of view with increased possibilities to personal and professional development. Another angle in the method was to promote work training to facilitate personal growth and development, and furthermore the self-efficacy beliefs instead of focusing only on the content of the training. (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010) In the engagement management model the importance of development discussions combined

with leadership and supervisory support, coaching and training was stressed to engagement facilitations (Gruman & Saks, 2011).

In Borealis, the training and development possibilities are taken care of through yearly performance management processes to set up clear targets and feedback of previous performance together with assessment on career and job prospects. Learning and development is promoted through both providing training for both to doing the current jobs, but also to meet the future needs of the company. However, in many regards Borealis promotes that it offers training and development opportunities, but also that it is also the employees responsibility to take these opportunities to develop and remain employable. The interviewees expressed unanimously the need for development. Additionally, for some of the interviewees the possibilities to advance to more challenging tasks was very important whereas some were very content in their current positions. Regardless of the career aspirations, the inner need to continuously learn and develop remained.

The basis for the employee engagement practices are drawn from the Borealis values “Responsible”, “respect”, “exceed” and “nimbleness™”. The values, combined with the previously mentioned people policy, people principles, and the strategy and mission of Borealis, can be seen as a way to delivering the message of expectations for the employees but also describing the company culture. The active use of the values in everyday lives was seen also in the way that they were used as a backbone in all Borealis practices including the special campaigns.

Borealis’ special campaigns, such as the Winning through excellence, Behaviour Excellence and the Wellbeing concept, combined with the regular practices can be seen as a way to develop employee engagement. The Winning through Excellence was founded to answer the external pressures of Borealis to gain factual changes in the ways Borealis operates. What can be seen as the main influencer in the campaign to employee engagement is the Behaviour Excellence promoting connecting, learning and implementing. The views of the employees in the interviews indicate that even though these actions were seen as important they were also a bit distant and not relating to their everyday lives. As there seemed to be abundant number of projects, they got blurred with each other and the purpose of the programs weren’t necessarily that clear to all members within the organization.

The Borealis’ Wellbeing concept lays the common company standards for four areas of employee well-being: health, job engagement, competence and work and private life

balance. Borealis sees that wellbeing is important to the individual employee but also to the employer because of improved performance and thus it is managed proactively. Wellbeing concept promotes that employees benefit through healthy lifestyle, motivation and engagement, competence development and balanced life. Borealis sees that the benefits they gain are engaged and healthier workforce, better results and sustainability. A main component in the wellbeing concept's health key area is the way Borealis works on ensuring that the employees have the opportunity and information to take care of their own physical and mental health. In the key area of job engagement Borealis makes the commitment that employees have the opportunity for personal growth according their career perspectives. The key aspect here is how that the employees are themselves responsible for their health but also their own personal growth but that Borealis commits to promoting these wellbeing areas. Schaufeli and Salanova (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010) promoted the idea that individual employees are encouraged to realize their potential and given the opportunity to flourish at work thus providing the ground for engagement. Through these individual based interventions, a company can positively affect in job and personal resources in a way that fosters and environment where employee engagement can prosper.

The cooperation between the occupational health care and Borealis has a long history, however the link is stronger with the HSE-department than Human Resources -department. This can be seen for instance of the ownership of the survey processes studied in this report; the ownership of the People Survey is in HR-department and the ownership of the Work Place Survey is in HSE-department. This also showed in the content of the work-related surveys, where the People Survey focuses more on the general views and the wellbeing of the organisation whereas the Work Place Survey is directed more in the individual level and finding more concrete development needs within the departments that are related to health and safety. Schaufeli and Salanova (2010) underline the importance that occupational health care and human resources management cooperation. The purpose of this to widen the scope from traditional occupational health care of treating existing and potential diseases to improving the wellbeing of the whole organisation. (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010) The work-related surveys can also be seen as a mean of evaluating and assessing employees as indicated by (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010). If the results indicated that there is a high level of negative answers and indicators within a department, the survey results are then used as a tool to direct the action to correct the situation.

What comes to the research question on how the development actions of Employee engagement in Borealis showed in the work-related surveys, the answer is that the overall level on employee engagement showed an upward trend in Porvoo in general throughout the years this study examined on. The employee engagement level rose from 76% in 2010, to 77% in 2012 and landed on to 82,2% in 2014. This indicates that the company wide actions provide the ground for the positive development on the level of employee engagement. However, the results of the People Surveys concerning employee engagement varied in different departments throughout the years. This could be seen in the results on those questions that had been asked throughout the whole 5-year period. On a particular year as the results in Materials Handling went down the same results went up in Administration or the other way around. This indicates the working environment and the actions done closer to the individual employee has a clear effect on the results as well.

Borealis has chosen an active approach to developing employee engagement, and thus the development actions in Borealis were abundant in number. Table 10 consists of a summary of the development methods and their Borealis counterparts combined with the perceptions about these actions that could be identified during the interviews.

Table 10 The perceptions of employees in the interviews

Method	In Borealis	The perceptions in interviews
Organisation based interventions (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperation of Occupational Health and Human Resources Management Positively affecting in job and personal resources Assessment and evaluate employees (right people in right positions) (Re)designing and changing workplace Enhancing transformational leadership Work training Management of careers 	People Survey and Work Related Survey Recruitment and talent management Performance management Learning and Development Wellbeing concept	The surveys and the corrective actions were generally valued <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow-up could be improved Actions could be more relevant to everyday work To clearly identify and eliminate those job demands that slow doing the real work (i.e. technical issues) Clearer development plans and organizational expectations could help the management of careers. The access to more challenging tasks, and the possibility to learn and develop was highly appreciated. The way Borealis handles the wellbeing of employees was seen as being on a very good level.
Individual based interventions (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010) Behavioural strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meaningful life where one can practise and develop their virtues and authentic life interpersonal behaviour Cognitive strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mindfulness Optimism and confidence Volitional strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting and pursuing goals 	Well-being concept Behaviour Excellence and Connect-Learn-Implement Performance Agreement Performance Management Learning and development	Campaigns, projects and corrective actions are generally appreciated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration on the amount and frequency More focus on the implementation Cognitive strategies could be strengthened. Responsibility for own development was understood in general.
Performance management and engagement (Gruman & Saks, 2011) Performance Agreement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of psychological contract Engagement Facilitation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job (re)design, leadership and supervisory support, coaching and training Performance and engagement appraisal and feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justice and trust (Meaningfulness, safety and availability)	Mission and strategy Borealis values Roles and responsibilities Performance Management People Policy and People principles Compensation & Benefits	Role clarity and the understanding of what the expectations are were important to the employees. Supervisory support was seen as very important

In general, the development actions were valued by the employees, however the sheer number of the processes and regular practices combined with the special campaigns done in Borealis also raised some criticisms. The interviewees brought in many ways forward the thought that the number of projects effects on the possibility to implement the project thoroughly, which causes confusion. The benefits of the campaigns are seen but there isn't enough time to see them through. All-in-all, in regards to the development actions done in Borealis, it feels like the tools are already there, but there is a need to brighten the message, patiently work on the current projects before embarking into any new ones to get the best result.

Overall, there is a high amount of actions done and processes in action in Borealis to enhance the level of employee engagement. Even though in general these actions were valued, there was also some amount of criticism towards the actions. One, repeating aspect in the interviews was that the frequency of the projects is high and that it affects the way they are implemented. There seems to be such a haste in getting everything done that there isn't time to see that the projects are taken through the line organization and made sure that everyone are on board. As there is such a high amount of actions taken to enhance engagement it is hard to imagine what would still be missing. On the opposite, it feels like the tools are already there but that the message of the campaigns and regular practices needs to be cleared with a thorough implementation such as has been done in the wellbeing campaign.

5.2 The meanings of employee engagement

The meanings the employees gave to employee engagement mainly show themselves through job demands, job resources and personal resources which can be seen as the antecedents of employee engagement (Bakker et al., 2007). The main themes that rose from the interviews concerning the job demands were the environmental stressors, such as workload, stress, limited resources, bureaucracy and technical challenges; and emotional demands like conflicts, uncertainty or a mismatch of goals and values. Job resources could be divided into work resources such as career prospects, learning and development, authority and challenging tasks; and organization resources such as cooperation, respect and support, communication and feedback and the sources for external and internal motivation. The personal resources were linked with either professional capabilities such as attitudes, resilience and optimism, dedication and self-esteem; or the personal lives that mainly manifested through the work and family life balance, friends, hobbies and overall a healthy way of spending free time.

The meanings the employees gave to employee engagement were in line with the theoretical background presented in the literary review of this study. Basing on earlier research employee engagement can be understood as a unique and desired motivational state that has cognitive, emotional and behavioural components, and it acts as a mediator between its antecedents of (job and personal resources, job demands) and the outcomes (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010; Saks, 2006; Saks & Gruman, 2014). Even though there were differences in the ways in which employee engagement was approached in the two, separate research branches that treated employee engagement as a separate construct or as a positive antithesis to burnout, there still could be identified some similarities in the antecedents to employee engagement. These similarities could also be identified in the findings made from Borealis. For instance, ability to self-expression was seen as an antecedent to psychological safety (Kahn, 1990), whereas those who perceived employee engagement as a positive antithesis to burnout emphasized supportive working community and job security as job resources (Maslach, et al., 1997 and 2001, and Demerouti et al., 2008). These two can be understood as different sides of the same coin. If an employee perceives the support of the working community and feels that there is job security, doesn't it affect positively on the on the ability of self-expression as well?

The results of the literary review indicated that job demands are the physiological, organisational or sociological aspects of a certain job that require some efforts that have an effect on the level of employee engagement (Demerouti et. al, 2001). The findings from Borealis indicated that they are doing abundant amount of different kinds of actions to improve the level of wellbeing and employee engagement. And the results from the work-related surveys in turn confirmed that in general the level of employee engagement is high. However, there also needs to be something that explains why the results weren't even better. The interviews showed some recurring themes that were related to either environmental stressors or emotional demands that can provide an answer in regards to Borealis.

The environmental stressors that were identified in Borealis were workload, stress, limited organizational resources, bureaucracy and technical challenges. The results of the Work Place Survey indicated the major difference on the type of work demands from the working environment. The physical working environment posed higher amount of demands in Materials Handlings whilst the mental demands were highlighted in Administration. In both department groups of Administration and Materials Handling the feelings of hurry were present. In Materials Handling, the Work Place Survey and the interview results indicated

that the feelings of hurry were more rapid in nature and consisted mainly of inconsistencies in the amount of work and the pressure of doing the tasks at hand as quickly as possible. In Administration, the Work Place Survey and the interviews indicated that the feelings of hurry are more constant in nature due to the number of tasks, and the number of tasks that are still on queue and in backlog. The interviewees explained that the feelings of hurry were amplified by the fact that as the roles are specialised there isn't a regular backup system in case of absences of office and the tasks wait in the workplace after returning to office. Even though the interview findings on regards to job resources indicated that you can rely on the cooperation in Borealis in a way that you always get help when you ask, the responsibility of getting the tasks done still rely on yourself. In the long run lacking of resources can lead to withdrawing behaviour and disengagement from work (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Hakanen & Roodt, 2010).

Job demands can also relate to working relationships. In Borealis, these showed in the Work Place Survey results and in the interviews in a way that in most of the departments participating in this study had or had had some difficulties in the working relationships. These difficulties were explained to have a cause in different personalities, lack of taking responsibility, lack of trust in either quality of the performance or of the mere presence of the person. Even though the manifestation of the challenges in working relationships were different, ultimately the cause can be directed on how this challenge effects the employee themselves. Typically, in Borealis these situations seemed to result an uneven distribution of work, as someone needs to make things done when the other person couldn't be trusted. As employees in both department groups indicated that there is a lot to be done and the employees expressed feelings of hurry, these challenges in working relationships were seen as very demanding and difficult situations.

In Borealis bureaucracy and technical challenges have an effect on the way the work is done. The bureaucracy was connected in the interviews to the size of the company, which manifested itself in the number of rules and regulations and on the chain of command in decision making. The rules were by many interviewees seen as limiting the ways in which the work can be done, however there also were some interviewees that indicated there exists a lot of leverage when it comes to creating new ways in which the company is taken forward. Some interviewees indicated that when decision making is taken up the chain of commands the decisions are being made far from the actual place of work and the higher they are taken the longer it takes, and it slows things down. They can also be seen having a negative effect

on the positive experiences of fluency of doing the work. Many interviewees also expressed that the IT-tools caused some hitches every now and then. Some stated that the Internet was slow, others perceived the systems used complicated and sometimes illogical. This was seen as problematic due to the data management, as the systems were complicated the data needed to be handled in many different places to ensure the access to the information for all necessary parties. Through identifying and eliminating these obstacles to fluent work it might positively affect in the job and personal resources of the employees.

According to Hakanen and Roodt (2010) job demands aren't always negative but that they can become stressors if the performance needed to overcome them requires a lot of efforts. Surely, not all of the themes that were identified as job demands pose as severe threat to the level of employee engagement, however, if there are many stressors simultaneously, then the situation might be different. Like in a situation of hurry, the systems and tools used should support getting things done and not slowing the employee down. Or when there is a lot to be done, then waiting for a response or an approval from someone higher up the hierarchy, might cause the feelings of frustration. Either way, whenever there are job demands, and especially in situation where job demands are high, the job resources can work as a buffer and even as a booster to employee engagement (Bakker et al., 2007).

Job resources are those physical, psychological, social or organizational aspects of a job that might have a positive effect on personal growth and development and goal-attainment at work (Demerouti et al., 2001). Whereas the job demands-resources model emphasized autonomy and opportunities to learn (Demerouti et. al, 2001), the findings made from Borealis emphasized career and prospects, learning and development, role clarity, challenges and tasks that are interesting, and authority. The main themes regarding job resources could be linked with either to content of the job and role and the possibilities to learn and develop within the role or towards a future role. The physical, psychosocial and social working environment formed another important part of job resources in Borealis, which manifested themselves through supportive working environment and the practices relating to healthcare and wellbeing in Borealis.

The content of the current job or role was seen as very important during the interviews. Many interviewees stated that if the job that you are doing isn't challenging at all that it becomes a struggle to perform and be interested in the tasks in the first place. There seemed to be a unanimous drive for learning and development that wasn't affected by career aspirations.

Furthermore, the possibilities to career development for those interested were also seen as important. If within a reasonable time the person could not advance or there didn't seem to be opportunities to advance it showed in the interviews as frustration, whereas opportunities seemed to lift the spirits of hopefulness.

The results from the personnel reports indicated that the yearly average turnover rates are low in Borealis. However, the results of the People Survey also indicated that there is a significantly larger number of employees that are seriously considering leaving Borealis. The lengths of careers have been traditionally long in Borealis, but the new generation of employees is growing in number with approximately a third of Porvoo's employees having a less than 5 years of experience within the company. The personnel reports also indicated that the turnover rate was highest with those that had been working for Borealis less than 10 years. Of course, not necessarily all of the new employees represent the younger generations, but there still might be a larger share of those that aren't that keen to loyalty, safety, and long career within the same company. There also seemed to be higher expectations to career advancement by the younger interviewees even though it wasn't as straightforward in this regard. These results don't tell definitive facts about who is committed and who is not, or who is interested in career advancements whereas the next person is content to staying in their current positions. There are always personal differences that need to be taken into considerations but what can be said about these results is that this is something that might need considerations and efforts in Borealis in the future.

However, the development methods of employee engagement also promoted the idea that employees need to take the responsibility for their own development both professionally and personally to remain employable (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010). In Borealis, this is also communicated to the employees through the people policy and people principles. The majority of the interviewees seemed to understand this however, with some that weren't content with their situation the expectations towards Borealis seemed bigger. Even though the claim states that the paternalistic management approach of life-long employments isn't expected from employee's side anymore (Bates, 2004), it feels like in Borealis there still lingers a thought of safe haven. This poses a contradiction of hopes of fast career development vs. the life of everything has always been this way and it will be still for 40 years to come. This contradiction might be the cause for the level of actual turnover compared to the higher number of employees that are considering leaving Borealis. All-in-

all, the number of employees considering leaving express their frustration towards Borealis in one way or another, or believe that the grass is greener somewhere else.

In Borealis, supportive working community was seen as important, and it was discussed in many ways during the interviews. The interviewees brought forward the way that everyone greets when they meet and how helping your colleagues is seen as important element of working culture in Borealis. Many interviewees also expressed that the team they are working consists of experts and are professionals in what they do. What the employees also valued greatly during the interviews were Borealis' way to invest in the wellbeing of its employees. Wellbeing was seen as very important by the interviewees, and the main elements contributing to it were seen as hobbies and exercising, friends and family and a healthy way of living in general. Many of these aspects were done during free time, but the results showed, according to the interviewees, also at the workplaces with increased energy levels. The personal lives of a person also had a significant effect on the level of employee engagement, but it seemed that they were more temporary in nature. Hardships encountered in the personal lives could affect the priorities of the person in the short basis by changing the focus from work to the personal lives. Basing on the stories told during the interviews, the way a person connects themselves in their work comes from the personality and inner drive.

Personal resources can be understood as the aspects of the self that are to do with resiliency (Hobfoll et al., 2003) which can develop and be developed and managed with the goal of improving the work performance (Hakanen & Roodt, 2010). In Borealis these findings were mainly concerned with self-esteem, the employee's perceptions towards work, such as strong work morale and the desire to do one's best and in some cases, optimism. The findings from this case study of Borealis don't give an answer to the dilemma presented in the literary review concerning whether employee engagement is a positive antithesis to burnout or is it a separate construct. Either way, the employees that are disengaged might miss the positive outcomes of being engaged. On a personal level these outcomes include growth and development and individual role performance and on the organizational-level they show as improved quality of performance and personal initiative (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010; Saks, 2006; Saks & Gruman, 2014)

The interviews indicated throughout the line that there was a strong desire amongst the interviewees of wanting to do their best. Doing a good job and at least knowing it themselves

was important. However, what was more important even was that doing a good job was recognized with a positive feedback from colleagues or supervisors. The fact that many interviewees expressed a desire to advance and to take more challenging tasks shows a willingness to invest additional efforts into the company. Moreover, seeing the importance of the tasks done indicates that the personal goals and organizational goals have weight in the person's life. A well balanced and good life was promoted a lot in the interviews. Many employees perceived that by having a good and well balanced and healthy life brought good for the employee themselves in addition to the employer through basically feeling good and doing a better job. Work that is sustainable in well-being sense and doesn't wear a person down meant also a capable employee according to the interviewees. Employee engagement shows also in loyalty and in the talk of the employees through being proud of Borealis, and talking about the good things instead of the negative things to friends and family members.

6 Conclusion

Research summary

The purpose of this case study research was to understand the real-life practices and methods used in Borealis during the past six years to develop employee engagement but also to see what kind of effects it has on the employees and what their perceptions towards these practices and methods. The methods of data collections used to achieve these objectives was to use pre-existing documentary materials from Borealis, that consisted of presentation materials, instructions, policies and principles, training materials, Borealis values, strategy and mission, personnel reports and the results of work-related surveys from the six-year period. Furthermore, the perceptions of the employees were gathered through interviews from two department groups within Borealis, which were the Materials Handling and Administration.

The methods of data analysis used on the pre-existing documentary data contained describing the different methods used during the past six-years in Borealis to develop employee engagement. These methods included the regular practices and the special campaigns that could be seen as contributing to the development. Then the work-related survey results from the six-year period were analysed to gain an understanding of what kind of progress if any can be identified to the level of employee engagement from the results. The methods of data analysis on the interviews were the verbatim transcription of the recordings and a thematic coding analysis to reveal the most important elements that can be identified from the data. The thematic analysis was followed by categorising the results into groups which consisted of similar features. The categories formed naturally followed the job demands-resources model (Demerouti et al., 2001, Bakker & Demerouti, 2007 and Hakanen & Roodt, 2010), so a synthesis was formed that is a combination of the elements of the job demands-resources model and the findings made from Borealis.

The main findings of this case study were that in Borealis there is a wide variety of regular practices that can be seen as contributing to the development of employee engagement, and that these practices are also supported by special campaigns. There seems to be an understanding in Borealis, that employee engagement is affected by a multitude of parallel actions, that are important separately and combined. However, as there is such amount of these practices there doesn't seem to be enough time to take them through the entire organisation, and the end result of some of the practices seem vague and unclear to the

employees. For me it seems, that the tools for developing employee engagement is already there but the message of the practices and campaigns needs to be cleared, the actions taken closer to the employees and to focus on aspects that are relevant to the daily lives of the employees.

The meanings the employees of Borealis gave to employee engagement mainly manifested themselves through job demands, job resources and personal resources, which can be understood as the antecedents (Bakker et al., 2007) of employee engagement. The job demands identified were related either to environmental stressors or emotional demands, job resources were linked with the work, career and the organisation as a whole and the personal resources could be seen stemming from professional capabilities and personal lives. The main findings from the meaning the employees gave to employee engagement were centred around the personal lives of a person, but also by the efforts invested on wellbeing by Borealis that were greatly appreciated. What was also very important was that the employees have a strong desire to develop in what they do, and learn new things. The elements that were seen as demanding in Borealis were close to the employees' everyday lives such as technical challenges, bureaucracy, challenges in working relationships, hurry or workload. These job demands can also be described as tiring, limiting, slowing or frustrating.

Employee engagement can be seen as a mediator between the antecedents and the positive outcomes on an individual level, such as improved role performance, growth and development and on the organisational-level through improved quality of performance (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010; Saks, 2006; Saks & Gruman, 2014). The main outcomes that can be identified in Borealis was the overall high level of employee engagement that was affected by the organisation level practives and the immediate physical and social working environment and the overall high level of work morale. The interviewees seemed the generally value Borealis as an employer and in return, pursue to give their best.

Practical and theoretical implications

The results of this research can be used on Borealis as a means evaluate how the development actions are perceived by the employees of Borealis Porvoo and as a tool to develop the development practices in the future. The results can also be used as an illustration of development methods of employee engagement in a large manufacturing organisation that operates as part of a international corporation. The number of studies concerning employee engagement is growing but there still exists only a limited amount of empirical studies on

the subject, in which this research gives its addition. This research also can give some different kind of insight due to the longitudinal view on the subject.

Limitations of the study

This research is a case study of employee engagement in Borealis, and as such it focuses on describing the different methods used within Borealis to develop employee engagement, how these development methods were perceived by the employees and what kind of meaning the employees of Borealis gave to employee engagement. This study is not trying to form a universal theory on the subject, but to describe and illustrate the situation as it is. The limitations to this study also came from the vastness of the data available within Borealis and through the interviews done, that affected on the depth of the data analysis. The focus of this study could have been limited in order to achieve a more in-depth analysis.

Suggestion for research and practice

The future studies on employee engagement could benefit from understanding the real-life practices to develop employee engagement in different kind of settings and organisations. Furthermore, the job demands that can be understood as hindrance stressors and challenge stressors could be understood better, when it comes to different kinds of employees. The challenge stressors can promote personal growth and achievements and hindrance stressors constrain it (Hakanen & Roodt, 2010). This could give an understanding on what kind of aspects of the job demands should be developed within organisations and what kind of aspects to eliminate. And which type of personalities are affected in different levels by different kinds of job demands. Of course, any singular aspect of the antecedents of job resources, personal resources or job demands to employee engagement or the outcomes of it could be studies further.

7 References

- Allen, N. J., & Meyer, J. P. (1990). The measurement and antecedents of affective, continuance and normative commitment to the organization. *Journal of occupational psychology*, 63(1), 1-18.
- Aro, A. W. (2006). *Onko työssä tolkkua?* Helsinki: Edita Publishing Oy.
- Bakker, A. B. (2011). An evidence-based model of work engagement. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 20(4), 265-269.
- Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2007). The job demands-resources model: State of the art. *Journal of managerial psychology*, 22(3), 309-328.
- Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2008). Towards a model of work engagement. *Career development international*, 13(3), 209-223.
- Bakker, A. B., & Leiter, M. P. (2010). Work engagement: Introduction. In A. B. Bakker, & M. P. Leiter, *Work engagement: A handbook of essential theory and practice* (pp. 1-9). Hove: Psychology Press.
- Bakker, A. B., Hakanen, J. J., Demerouti, E., & Xanthopoulou, D. (2007). Job resources boost work engagement, particularly when job demands are high. *Journal of educational psychology*, 99(2), 274-284.
- Bakker, A. B., Schaufeli, W. B., Leiter, M. P., & Taris, T. W. (2008). Work engagement: An emerging concept in occupational health psychology. *Work & Stress*, 22(3), 187-200.
- Bakker, A. B., van Emmerik, H., & Euwema, M. C. (2006). Crossover of burnout and engagement in work teams. *Work and occupations*, 33(4), 464-489.
- Bates, S. (2004). Getting engaged. *HR Magazine* 49.2, 44-51.
- Becker, H. S. (1960). Notes on the concept of commitment. *American journal of Sociology*, 32-40.
- Bersin, J. (2014, April 10). *It's Time To Rethink The 'Employee Engagement' Issue*. Retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com/sites/joshbersin/2014/04/10/its-time-to-rethink-the-employee-engagement-issue/#45091b018279>. Accessed on [21.10.2016]

- Borealis AG. (2015a). *About Borealis: Strategy*. Retrieved from <http://www.borealisgroup.com/en/company/about-borealis/about-borealis/>. [Accessed on 11.10.2015].
- Borealis AG. (2015b). BBA HR Academy: Advanced module Employee Engagement, version 02/2015. Vienna, Austria.
- Borealis AG. (2015c). People Development Community. Retrieved from <http://borenaportal.mignetwork.net/info/Pages/053.aspx> [Accessed on 19th of February, 2017]
- Borealis AG. (2016a). *About Borealis: Values*. Retrieved from [www.borealisgroup.com: http://www.borealisgroup.com/en/company/about-borealis/about-borealis/](http://www.borealisgroup.com/en/company/about-borealis/about-borealis/) [Accessed on 20.11.2016]
- Borealis AG. (2016b). *Winning through Excellence*. Retrieved from <http://borenaportal.mignetwork.net/info/pages/Winning-through-Excellence.aspx> [Accessed on 19th of February, 2017]
- Borealis Polymers Oy. (2012). *Henkilöstöraportti 2012*. Porvoo.
- Borealis Polymers Oy. (2013a). *Henkilöstöraportti 2013*. Porvoo.
- Borealis Polymers Oy. (2013b). Behavioral Excellence - toimintamallien muutos ja ryhmätehtävä. Porvoo.
- Borealis Polymers Oy. (2014a). *Henkilöstöraportti 2014*. Porvoo.
- Borealis Polymers Oy. (2014b). Työilmapiirikartoitus 2014, Porvoon toimipaikan tulokset. Porvoo, Finland.
- Borealis Polymers Oy. (2015a). Borealis Porvoo presentation material. Porvoo, Finland.
- Borealis Polymers Oy. (2015b). *BOY-2044, ed. 1: Työpaikkaselvitykset Borealis Polymers Oy:ssä*. Porvoo, Finland.
- Borealis Polymers Oy. (2015c). *Henkilöstöraportti 2015*. Porvoo.
- Borealis Polymers Oy. (2015d). Wellbeing Concept - Introduction.

- Crawford, E. R., LePine, J. A., & Rich, B. L. (2010). Linking job demands and resources to employee engagement and burnout: a theoretical extension and meta-analytic test. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 95(5), 834-848.
- Cropanzano, R., & Mitchell, M. S. (2005). Social exchange theory: An interdisciplinary review. *Journal of management*, 31(6), 874-900.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal performance*. New York: Harper.
- David McLeod. (2016). *Engage for success* . Retrieved from What is Employee Engagement?: <http://engageforsuccess.org/what-is-employee-engagement>. Accessed on [21.10.2016]
- Demerouti, E., Bakker, A. B., Nachreiner, F., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2001). The job demands-resources model of burnout. *Journal of Applied psychology*, 86(3), 499-512.
- Eriksson, P., & Kovalainen, A. (2008). *Qualitative methods in business research*. Sage.
- Fleck, S., & Inceoglu, I. (2010). A comprehensive framework for understanding and predicting engagement. In S. Albrecht, *Handbook of Employee Engagement: Perspectives, issues, research and practice* (pp. 31-42). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited.
- Frese, M., & Fay, D. (2001). 4. Personal initiative: An active performance concept for work in the 21st century. *Research in organizational behavior*, 23, 133-187.
- Gorgievski, M. J., & Hobfoll, S. E. (2008). Work can burn us out or fire us up: Conservation of resources in burnout and engagement. In J. R. Halbesleben, *Handbook of stress and burnout in health care* (pp. 7-22). Hauppauge: Nova Science Publishers, Inc.
- Gruman, J. A., & Saks, A. M. (2011). Performance management and employee engagement. *Human Resources Management Review*, 123-136.
- Hakanen, J. (2004). *Työuupumuksesta työn imuun: työhyvinvointitutkimuksen ytimessä ja reuna-alueilla*.
- Hakanen, J. J., & Roodt, G. (2010). Using the job demands-resources model to predict engagement: Analysing a conceptual model. In A. B. Bakker, & M. P. Leiter, *Work*

- engagement: A handbook of essential theory and research* (pp. 85-101). Hove: Psychology Press.
- Hakanen, J. J., Bakker, A. B., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2006). Burnout and work engagement among teachers. *Journal of school psychology, 43*(6), 495-513.
- Harter, J. K., Schmidt, F. L., & Agrawal, S. (2009). *Q12® Meta-Analysis: The Relationship Between Engagement at Work and Organizational Outcomes*. Princeton: Gallup. Inc.
- Harter, J. K., Schmidt, F. L., & Hayes, T. L. (2002). Business-unit-level relationship between employee satisfaction, employee engagement, and business outcomes: a meta-analysis. *Journal of applied psychology, 87*(2), 268-279.
- Hirsjärvi, S., & Hurme, H. (2000). *Tutkimushaastattelu. Teemahaastattelun teoria ja käytäntö*. Helsinki: Yliopistopaino.
- Hirsjärvi, S., Remes, P., & Sajavaara, P. (1997). *Tutki ja kirjoita*. Helsinki: Tammi.
- Hobfoll, S. E., Johnson, R. J., Ennis, N., & Jackson, A. P. (2003). Resource loss, resource gain, and emotional outcomes among inner city women. *Journal of personality and social psychology, 84*(3), 632-643.
- Kahn, W. A. (1990). Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work. *Academy of management journal 33.4*, 692-724.
- Kanungo, R. N. (1982). Measurement of job and work involvement. *Journal of applied psychology, 67*(3), 341-349.
- Kowalski, B. (2003). The Engagement Gap. *Training 40.4*, 62.
- Lawler, E. E., & Hall, D. T. (1970). Relationship of job characteristics to job involvement, satisfaction, and intrinsic motivation. *Journal of Applied psychology, 54*(4), 305-312.
- Legge, K. (2005). *Human resources, realities and rhetorics*. London: Palgrave.
- Locke, E. A. (1969). What is job satisfaction? *Organizational behavior and human performance 4.4*, pp. 309-336.
- Macey, W. H., & Schneider, B. (2008). The meaning of employee engagement. *Industrial and organizational Psychology 1.1*, 3-30.

- Maslach, C., & Jackson, S. E. (1981). The measurement of experienced burnout. *Journal of organizational behavior*, 2(2), 99-113.
- Maslach, C., & Leiter, M. P. (2008). Early predictors of job burnout and engagement. *Journal of applied psychology*, 93(3), 498-512.
- Maslach, C., Jackson, S. E., & Leiter, M. P. (1997). Maslach burnout inventory. *Evaluating stress: A book of resources*, 3, 191-218.
- Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. B., & Leiter, M. P. (2001). Job burnout. *Annual review of psychology*, 52(1), 397-422.
- May, D. R., Gilson, R. L., & Harter, L. M. (2004). The psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety and availability and the engagement of the human spirit at work. *Journal of occupational and organizational psychology*, 77(1), 11-37.
- McGee, G. W., & Ford, R. C. (1987). Two (or more?) dimensions of organizational commitment: Reexamination of the affective and continuance commitment scales. *Journal of applied psychology*, 72(4), 638-641.
- Organ, D. W. (1997). Organizational citizenship behavior: It's construct clean-up time. *Human performance* 10.2, pp. 85-97.
- Porter, G. (1996). Organizational impact of workaholism: Suggestions for researching the negative outcomes of excessive work. *Journal of occupational health psychology*, 1(1), 70-84.
- Porter, L. W., Steers, R. M., Mowday, R. T., & Boulian, P. V. (1974). Organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover among psychiatric technicians. *Journal of applied psychology*, 59(5), 603-609.
- Rich, B. L., Lepine, J. A., & Crawford, E. R. (2010). Job engagement: Antecedents and effects on job performance. *Academy of management journal*, 53(3), 617-635.
- Rothbard, N. P. (2001). Enriching or depleting? The dynamics of engagement in work and family roles. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 46.4, 655-684.
- Saks, A. M. (2006). Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement. *Journal of managerial psychology* 21.7, 600-619.

- Saks, A. M., & Gruman, J. M. (2014). What do we really know about employee engagement? *Human Resource Development Quarterly* 25.2, 155-182.
- Salanova, M., Llorens, S., Cifre, E., Martínez, I. M., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2003). Perceived collective efficacy, subjective well-being and task performance among electronic work groups an experimental study. *Small Group Research*, 34(1), 43-73.
- Schaufeli, W. B., & Bakker, A. B. (2004). Job demands, job resources, and their relationship with burnout and engagement: A multi-sample study. *Journal of organizational Behavior*, 25(3), 293-315.
- Schaufeli, W. B., & Bakker, A. B. (2010). Defining and measuring work engagement: Bringing clarity to the concept. In A. B. Bakker, & M. P. Leiter, *Work engagement: A handbook of essential theory and research* (pp. 10-24.). Hove: Psychology Press.
- Schaufeli, W. B., & Salanova, M. (2010). How to improve work engagement. In S. L. Albrecht, *Handbook of Employee Engagement: Perspectives, Issues, Research and Practice* (pp. 399-415). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited.
- Schaufeli, W. B., Salanova, M., González-Romá, V., & Bakker, A. B. (2002). The measurement of engagement and burnout: A two sample confirmatory factor analytic approach. *Journal of Happiness studies*, 3(1), 71-92.
- Schaufeli, W. B., Taris, T. W., & Van Rhenen, W. (2008). Workaholism, burnout, and work engagement: three of a kind or three different kinds of employee well-being? *Applied Psychology*, 57(2), 173-203.
- Silverman, D. (1993). *Interpreting qualitative data: methods for analysing talks, text and interaction*. Sage.
- Silverman, D. (2010). *Doing Qualitative Research: A practical handbook, 3rd edition*. Sage.
- Sonnentag, S. (2003). Recovery, work engagement, and proactive behavior: a new look at the interface between nonwork and work. *Journal of applied psychology*, 88(3), 518-528.
- Sonnentag, S., Dormann, C., & Demerouti, E. (2010). Not all days are created equal: The concept of state work engagement. In A. B. Bakker, & M. P. Leiter, *Work engagement: A handbook of essential theory and research* (pp. 25-38). Hove: Psychology Press.

- Spence, J. T., & Robbins, A. S. (1992). Workaholism: Definition, measurement, and preliminary results. *Journal of personality assessment*, 58(1), 160-178.
- Towers Watson. (2010, 2012, 2014). *People Survey results*. Borealis Polymers Oy.
- Tuomi, J., & Sarajärvi, A. (2009). *Laadullinen tutkimus ja sisällönanalyysi*. Tammi.
- Wollard, K. K., & Shuck, B. (2011). Antecedents to employee engagement a structured review of the literature. *Advances in Developing Human Resources* 13.4, 429-446.
- Xanthopoulou, D., Bakker, A. B., Demerouti, E., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2007). The role of personal resources in the job demands-resources model. *International journal of stress management*, 14(2), 121-141.

8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1: Borealis Wellbeing concept

HEALTH



Our Commitments	This means...	Examples
1. Borealis ensures a safe and healthy working environment, providing the right tools and training for the job	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Systematic survey of all workplaces in order to prevent occupational health risks, occupational illnesses and accidents – Training programmes – Safety trainings – Right tools/equipment/personal protective equipment for the job – Promote same safety and health behaviour in private life as is promoted at work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Work place survey programme – Analysis of sick-leave statistics – Rehabilitation programmes – On-boarding – On the job training – Managing safety in Borealis, 5 life saving rules
2. Borealis provides employees with opportunities and information to manage their own <u>physical</u> health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 24 Hours care programme as defined by each location (HSE-4013) – Preventive medical checks – Promote a healthy life-style – Access to company contracted external expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Encourage participation in physical activities and give financial support for that in different ways – Publish topics related to physical health – Provide health insurance – Provide preventive medical health checks at least every 5th year – Offering of fruit basket – Offering of subscription to sport facilities – Provide education regarding a healthy life-style (e.g. promote eating healthy also at home) – Company doctor, Occupational Health Services
3. Borealis provides employees with opportunities and information to manage their <u>mental</u> health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 24 Hours care programme as defined by each location (HSE-4013) – Access to company contracted external expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Encourage participation in social activities and give financial support for that in different ways – Publish topics related to psychological health – Provide time- & stress management training – Access to psychologist, Occupational Health Services

JOB ENGAGEMENT



Our Commitments	This means...	Examples
1. Borealis ensures that employees are engaged in meaningful and challenging work whilst being recognised and rewarded for their contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Possibilities for international assignments with well-planned repatriation process – Agreed team and Individual goals linked to transparent incentive programs – Performance management process with open dialogue between manager and employee – Internal and external recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – People mobility specialists in locations – Repatriation process, repatriation interviews – BIP, site bonus, special awards – Excellence Day – Borealis anniversary events, jubilee benefits – Great Place to Work, Employer of the Year
2. Borealis provides employees with the opportunity for personal development and growth in line with their career perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Structured employee owned onboarding / introduction program for new colleagues, – Well-defined and structured development dialogue process at all levels – Systematic development of (internal) training concepts for managers and employees – Identified career development paths for defined technical/managerial areas – Transparency in recruiting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ethics & Safety trainings, License to Lead – BBA (Borealis Business Academy) – Learning & Development Network – Technical Training organisation – Front Line Leader - training – Talent programs, People Days – TCM / TCL (Technical Competence Management / Technical Career Ladder) – Borealis - Borouge Job opportunities available to all employees on <u>Borena</u>
3. Borealis creates an environment where employees can openly communicate, give and receive feedback supported by the People Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Culture of open communication between employees and management – Application of <i>Connect-Learn-Implement</i> – Utilizing CCC as a forum for discussions – Encouraging participation by providing platforms and tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Executive Board tour – Open forums in locations – Giving and receiving feedback trainings – Fire Side Chats by Executive Board members – Local Works Councils – <u>Synergi</u>, Local employee initiative processes, Platform for Change

COMPETENCE



Our Commitments	This means...	Examples
1. All employees have the opportunity to grow and expand their competencies within Borealis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All role descriptions are available via SharePoint - Borealis Business Academy offering a broad range of training programs - Development needs is an integrated part of myPDS - Line Management Responsibility to provide Coaching and Feedback on development needs for both current and future roles (career aspiration) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - http://borena.mignetwork.net/dep/00104023/Pages/RoleDescriptions.aspx - http://borena.mignetwork.net/coll/cop/peopdev/bbafit/default.aspx - http://borena.mignetwork.net/dep/00104023/perfmt/Pages/Default.aspx/ - Borealis-Borouge job opportunities on Borena - Support for material and fees connected to agreed development programs on own time
2. Borealis recognises employees' competencies and actively promotes ways to share and develop this with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Model 70-20-10 is utilised across the group (training and development is offered 70% on the job, 20% as e.g. project assignments, mentoring and 10% as formal training) - Networking based on Connect, Learn and Implement - Excellence Day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical Competence Management in Innotech - Additional roles "10% hats" in HR - Project Assignments as either Steering Committee Member, Project Leader, Project Member or Project Sounding Board - Celebrate excellent achievements
3. Borealis effectively manages the transfer of competencies between employees across the organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Borealis Management System (BMS) with up to date documentation on policies, procedures, handbooks, processes and instructions available through MEGA Suite - Succession planning is used by the line manager as a vehicle for securing knowledge transfer including tacit knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop BBA modules and act as Trainer - Where possible offering Advisory Roles a period before retirement - Job rotation and assignments to support cross learning - Hiring in time (e.g. before retirements) - Mentoring

WORK AND PRIVATE LIFE BALANCE



<u>Our Commitments</u>	<u>This means...</u>	<u>Examples</u>
1. Borealis ensures an open, fair and respectful working culture based on our Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Education of line managers for early intervention and being alert for possible issues – Behavioural excellence embedded in the organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Training for early intervention like Speak Up – Take Care! – Supportive communication guidelines (like conference call guideline), soft jour fix meetings – Acknowledging time zones , working days and holiday seasons between locations – Shift team deciding their own team rules
2. Leaders and employees are committed to finding the appropriate balance between work and private life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Use of leaves according to local legislation – Social activities – Structured career planning dialogue – Workload and work design management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Nursing leave (children, parents), sabbatical leave, study leave – Year end celebrations, family days, open air events, social events – Clear communication of possibilities and timeframe, commitment via e.g. myPDS – Support to consume your holidays – Ensure back-up within the team
3. Leaders are open to finding solutions for flexible working time arrangements to the benefit of both parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Provide opportunities in line with local legislation and agreements – Part time arrangements – Remote work arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Flexitime, trusted working time, compressed workweek – Part-time employment, part time retirement/phased retirement, phased return from leaves, job sharing – Home office, occasional working from home